If We're Being Honest

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Multi

Fandom:
僕のヒーローアカデミア | Boku no Hero Academia | My Hero Academia

Relationship:
Class 1-A & Class 1-A (My Hero Academia), Bakugou Katsuki/Kirishima Eijirou, Midoriya Izuku/Todoroki Shouto, Class 1-A & Midoriya Izuku, Bakugou Katsuki & Midoriya Izuku, Bakugou Katsuki & Class 1-A, Jirou Kyouka/Yaoyorozu Momo, Ashido Mina & Bakugou Katsuki & Kaminari Denki & Kirishima Eijirou & Sero Hanta, Ashido Mina & Kirishima Eijirou, Kaminari Denki/Shinsou Hitoshi, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead/Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Shinsou Hitoshi, Iida Tenya & Midoriya Izuku & Uraraka Ochako

Character:
Class 1-A (My Hero Academia), Midoriya Izuku, Bakugou Katsuki, Todoroki Shouto, Kirishima Eijirou, Uraraka Ochako, Iida Tenya, Kaminari Denki, Shinsou Hitoshi, Yaoyorozu Momo, Jirou Kyouka, Yagi Toshinori | All Might, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Ashido Mina

Additional Tags:
Truth Quirk (My Hero Academia), Hit by a Quirk (My Hero Academia), Shinsou Hitoshi is in Class 1-A, Class 1-A as Family (My Hero Academia), Bakugou Katsuki is Bad at Feelings, Depressed Midoriya Izuku, Midoriya Izuku Needs A Hug, Implied/Referenced Suicidal Thoughts, Bakugou Katsuki Apologizes, Bakugou Katsuki & Midoriya Izuku Friendship, One For All Quirk is Revealed (My Hero Academia), Kirishima Eijirou is a Good Friend, Regretful Bakugou Katsuki, Protective Bakugou Katsuki, Literal Sleeping Together, Insecure Kirishima Eijirou, Depressed Kirishima Eijirou, Bakugou

Katsuki is a Good Friend, Quirkless Discrimination (My Hero Academia), Kirishima Eijirou Has Self-Esteem Issues, Insecure Bakugou Katsuki, Angst, Abused Todoroki Shouto, Abusive Todoroki Enji | Endeavor, Todoroki Enji | Endeavor's Bad Parenting, Abused Shinsou Hitoshi, Midoriya Izuku & Shinsou Hitoshi Friendship, Implied/Referenced Child Abuse, Physical Abuse, Kaminari Denki Angst, Kaminari Denki Has ADHD, Insecure Kaminari Denki, Depressed Kaminari Denki, Abused Bakugou Katsuki, Bakugou Mitsuki's Bad Parenting, Abusive Bakugou Mitsuki, Bakugou Masaru's Bad Parenting, Bakugou Katsuki Needs a Hug, Parental Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead Adopts Shinsou Hitoshi, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead Adopts Bakugou Katsuki, Hurt/Comfort, Bakugou Katsuki Gets Therapy, Jirou Kyouka & Kaminari Denki are Best Friends, Soft Bakugou Katsuki, Truth Serum, Angst with a Happy Ending

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Bnha Bookclub Discord Recs, MHAfavorites, Got 99 problems but these ain't one, Ace's Favorite FIcs, Stories that made me cry, FreakingAmazingFics, hereBeGems, Fanfiction ***I*** Deem Worthy Of The Name, FinishedBooks, MHA_Completed_Story, Best Bakugou HCannon Fics, fics i can and will stay up to 3am to re-read, Feeeeelings, Best of my favorite feral gremlins (ง •̀_•́)ง (ง •̀_•́)ง, BNHA Fics I Adore, bumblebee's fav BNHA fics! :-D, SakurAlpha's Fic Rec of Pure how did you create this you amazing bean, FreakingAmazingFavorites, BNHA Treasure Box, be crime do gay - the greatest collection of gay fanfic to ever exist., it's cry time again, Yes_ofa_roundhurrr, isabella9792_readinglist, my finished reads, the ABSOLUTE BANGER 10/10's that i loved, eugenia's bookshelf, bnha, Best of Hurt/Comfort, BNHA BEST SHORT STORIES TO EVER GRACE THE INTERNET, BB42_Favorite_MHA_fics, Best fics, Tales of the Hell Class, BNHA Recommendations, absolute best picks, BNHA_FICS, Books Read - Completed (MHA), Road to Nowhere Discord Recs, Best Stories, Behold the Sacred Texts, ✧Absolute All-Time Faves✧, Finished Fics (bnha), Finished Fics That Made Me Cry, The Abyss Records, Problem Class, late night reads, BNHA Fanfiction Archive, Best stories for sleepless nights, Quirkless Deku, Fics That Make Me Feel Good, Dadzawa - An Aizawa Shouta Zine, great fics from all fandoms :), Absolute Favorites, ♥ All-Time Favorites ♥, The Bard's Roost, BEST MHA FICS TO EVER BE MADE 🧢, BaNHAmmer, 📚 Fanfic Forum Discord Recs, best fics to ever exist, fics that made me cry, NOW THESE ARE SOME GOOD

BNHA FICS, Subscribed books I've finished, bnha fics i would die for, Surprise! It’s Trauma!, IZUKU MIDORIYA AND THE MAGIC OF REALIZING HOW F*CKED UP YOUR SOCIETY IS, BNHA fics that deserve an award, Lex's Favorite BNHA Fics ٩(●˙▿˙●)۶, Jenn Recs, Awakeat3chaos, Very Gay, Abused_Bakugou, S.T.I.L.L., Made me cry like a b, my precious recs, My Favorite BNHA Fics, 99NicelyFinishedFics, Flashfreeze Recs, Leannic Recs, Heaven’s Quality Control, my brain juices are tingling, mha fanfic that waters my crops, Like A Favorite Sweater, bnha !, MHA FICS, Don't forget, ✧ anime fanfics ✧, Trying to keep track of what I read: A collection, Worth It BNHA Fanfics Reading List - Completed, noxgazer's favourites, Favs mesmo, I will re read it again insted of studying for sure, ✧I don't have a personal life✧, Orbit’s Fics To Reread, completed fictions, Boys_get_shook, i have way too much time on my hands lemme reread this fic, my heart is here, oml these fics are bloody amazing, Genmhasmfffffff, FEELS, Fics for D-Nasty, DadZawa Protecc fics, My Fav BNHA Complete Works, 💯(a 100) good reasons to scream at 3 a.m. 💯, STO My Hero Academia - completed works, 👌 good shit, Amazing fics and where to find them, Izuku is a shine, Completed good books, JNW1'S favourite MHA/BNHA fics, wxrds' serotonin :), Completed stories I've read, FicsforKrusti, My Hero Academia, my personal stash of good bnha shit, my hero academia: a medley, CoffeeAt3, These fics emotionally wrecked me, I’m manly enough to admit I cried reading these, Jlrlo, Making me dehydrated with this sob fest, Just Some Damn Good MHA Fics, Best of the Best, Favorite Bakugou Angst with a Dash of Fluff, fics i cant stop thinking about, Eatbook's Cherished and wanting more All Fandoms, The Midoriya Izuku Archive, goodlol, Look it's the good kush, if you wanna cry, FTTN's Favorites, my most favourite fics, Dadzawa Vibes, Good Books To Read A Concerning Number of Times, Alina’sfavoritebnhafics!, broccoli shit finished, ty's faves, I’ll come back, fics that give me life, Aishu’s favorite fics, My Favorite MHA Fanfics, BNHA Fics that cured my cancer, i cried like a little bitch, My Hero Academia, The Goodest Shit, Finished Works Me Have Read, Good Works Me Have Read, Fav BNHA Fanfics, Fics That Altered My Little Brain's Chemistry, Dadzawa Soup for The Soul (TiaLee), Tia is crying again, raes unread fics (no specific fandom) woah, Fics that soothe my soul at 4am, Jaded Discord Server Recommendations, Plus Ultra! MHA Fics, cat’s fav fics, Fics to hyperfixate on, Aether's BNHA Likes, MHA_Masterpieces, PreciousPaperBag‘s Favorites, the best bnha fanfics on this whole website, Autiser’s Favorites

Stats:

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If We’re Being Honest

by thequeenofwhump

Summary

“So we’ll just blurt out random things?” Mina asked. “Like the fact that I can’t eat sandwiches not cut down the middle?”

Snickers rose from the class as she turned a bright red.

Aizawa sighed. “Not exactly. The quirk is a weird mix between a truth quirk and a prone to suggestion quirk, thanks to the boy's parents. It means you’ll be under the effects of a normal truth quirk, but you also won’t have the ability to keep yourselves from oversharing.”

“So we’ll all be spouting fucking word vomit like Deku?!”

“Yes, Bakugou. Fucking word vomit.”

—

Or

Class 1-A is hit by a very powerful truth quirk, and lots of things come out. Some things are quite harmless - quite the opposite, really - others are quite funny, and some open wounds that never really healed.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Hit By A (Very Inconvenient) Quirk

Chapter Notes

> Have you ever been reading a fic/watching a show and thought "why don't they just TALK to each other" well then this is the fic for you my good friend enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"So you're saying this will last a whole *month*?!" Uraraka exclaimed.

"As far as the quirk specialists are saying, yes," Aizawa said tiredly. The light from the windows cast a shadow over his face that made him almost look like a ghost. "The child that caused this doesn't have a very good handle on their quirk, and it's a powerful one. A month is the least amount of time it will last. It's lucky just this class was affected."

"So we'll just blurt out random things?" Mina asked. "Like the fact that I can't eat sandwiches not cut down the middle?"

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"So we'll all be spouting fucking word vomit like Deku?!"

"Yes, Bakugou. Fucking word vomit."

“This doesn’t make sense!” Midoriya cried. “There’s no way a quirk of someone so young would be powerful enough to work on such a large group of people for so long, and even if it were, why was the range of the initial blast so small if it was that powerful? The logistics alone-“

“Shut up, nerd!”

“It doesn’t matter how it works,” Mr. Aizawa said, already looking even more exhausted than he had at the beginning of class. “As of right now, due to this quirk, you are not to leave campus, your phones are being confiscated, and the wifi is being shut down in your dorm-“

Numerous protests accompanied this announcement, and Aizawa gave them a subtle glare to quiet them. “I feel like I don’t need to remind you that if anything confidential were to get out due to this quirk, it would be disastrous.”

Most of the class paled at that. The idea of one of them spilling information that the media - or worse, the villains - could use for their own malicious intent was enough to shut them up about having no internet or phones for so long.

“That being said,” Aizawa continued after letting that sink in for a moment, “You all will probably share things with each other you would rather keep hidden. I implore all of you to be accepting of one another’s faults and words. You will all be heroes together one day and that means you have to trust one another.”

The class took in what he said solemnly. If this was what they had to do because of this quirk, then that was what they were going to do.

It didn’t mean they had to like it.

The first few unexpected truths weren't all that much. A couple of "no I wasn't paying attention"s and a few "yes I did the homework in homeroom"s in class were to be expected, especially considering the work ethic of some of the students. Those caused the class to laugh, if a bit awkwardly - it reminded them that they had to watch what they were saying at all times (even if the knew deep down there was nothing they could do about it).

The first interesting truth to come out was from Bakugou.

"I'm not actually going to bed early, I just use that time to read romance novels because I don't want anyone to know I read them."

That admission had come with a hand slapping over his mouth as the entire room stared at him, before they all burst out into laughter so loud the dorms next to them could hear.

"Oh my *God*, Bakugou," Jirou wheezed with tears in her eyes. The entire rest of the self proclaimed Bakusquad was too busy rolling on the floor to even say anything, ignoring the almost-death threats that rapid fired from the boys mouth.

(If anything, the shout of "*I will metaphorically kill you*" made them laugh even harder.)

They refused to let it go, and for hours they asked him about all of his favorite books and what part of the gushy romance stuff he liked the best. They finally dropped it when Bakugou threatened to shave all their heads - and because of the quirk they knew he was being dead serious.

“Attention everyone!” Mina announced from the entrance to the common room, making everyone turn her way where she was standing with Jiro, Hagakure, and Yaomomo.

“What’s up?” Kirishima asked from his place at the table, where he was currently engaged in a very intense game of Uno with Kaminari and Sero, who were all finding it very hard to not shout out what cards they had in their hands.

“Well, the girls and I were thinking-“

“It was totally your idea, Mina,” Jiro interrupted.

“Well, you guys supported me and eveything so you should get credit too, since you guys are my best friends and I appreciate everything-“

“We get it!” Bakugou yelled from the kitchen. “The stupid truth quirk is making you spill your guts about love and friendship! Get to the point!”

Mina turned pinker than normal, rubbing the back of her neck. “Well, since Aizawa said we can’t use the internet for the whole month, and none of us have our phones anymore, we were thinking-“

“We should totally have a bunch of movie nights!” Hagakure shouted excitedly.

Uraraka shot up from her seat on the couch by Iida, eyes shining. “That’s an amazing idea!”

“But what about the truth quirk?” Kaminari said. “Like, if we’re all together all the time won’t it be even easier to reveal stuff about ourselves?”

“Eh? Since when did Dunce Face get a brain?”

“But think about it,” Kirishima said. “We hardly ever get this time to bond with each other, but now we can since we’re pretty much isolated to the dorms. I for one don’t want to spend all my time holed up in my room.”

“Kirishima’s right,” Midoriya said, seemingly deep in thought. “We’re all going to be heroes together some day, and that requires a deep level of trust, just like Aizawa said. If we don’t trust each other enough to sit together while anything could blurt out at any moment, we won’t be very good heroes. How can civilians trust us when we can’t even trust each other?”

He looked around and noticed everyone staring at him. “Er, I mean-“

“Midoriya!” Iida suddenly cried, launching towards him with vigor. “That was truly inspiring! As class rep, I couldn’t have said it better myself! All in favor of said movie nights say I!”

A chorus of enthusiastic - and a couple unenthusiastic, but no one noticed - “I”s rang throughout the room.

Iida cleared his throat and shot a pointed look towards the kitchen,

where slight grumbling could be heard before Bakugou slumped out of the kitchen and fell into a chair.

"I," he said through his teeth, causing loud cheering from all the members of the Bakusquad.

"I mean, it's a good thing Bakugou agreed to come," Jiro muttered to the other girls, snickering. "I for one would love to hear more of his confessions about romance novels."

She was louder than she meant to be, which meant Bakugou definitely heard her. "What did I say about shaving your head, Ears!"

"I mean, she has a point," Mina said, apparently ignoring whatever threat to her hair Bakugou was imposing. "You really don't seem the type of guy to like sappy stuff."

"Well I started liking it when I was younger, but kind of grew out of it as time went on because - *oh no you fucking don't you pink demon*!"

Mina laughed but didn't stop. "Wait, if you grew out of it, then why do you still read them?"

"Because it's not like I can actually have romance with the person I want, so I chose the next best thing!" he snapped before his eyes widened - as did everyone else's in the room - and he promptly smacked a hand over his mouth.

Mina's eyes turned to stars and she shot up in front of Bakugou's now scarlet face, prying his hand away. "Who?! Who is it?! Tell us *right now*!"

The entire common room was staring at them now, and their eyes were glued to Bakugou as he slumped down in his seat, seemingly to get as far from Mina as possible.

“I do *not* want to tell you.” Everyone in the room knew how much willpower Bakugou was using right then - the effects of the quirk were extremely powerful, and to resist a direct question like that was near impossible.

“Please? Who is it? I’ll love you forever!” she dragged out the last word as she slid down to the floor.

Iida stood up abruptly. “It is extremely unheroic of us to take advantage of-“

“Shitty hair,” Bakugou blurted before, yet again, smacking himself in the face. He seemed to be doing that a lot, lately.

Nobody moved, but all eyes slowly shifted to the redhead at the table, who was growing redder by the second.

Kirishima stood up slowly. “Are you - are you serious, man?”

Bakugou groaned. “I am literally fucking incapable of not being serious right now, you dunderhead.”

“Good, because I like you, too.”

Bakugou shot out of his seat, nearly smacking into Mina on his way up. “Wait - really?!”

“I mean, you were the one that just called me a dunder-“

Bakugou cut him off by smashing their lips together, and if the entire common room cheered, they didn’t really notice.

“Well, maybe something good will come of this quirk, right?” Midoriya said to Shinso sometime after the other two had gone upstairs for some . . . romance reading.

“Well I would hope,” Todoroki said blankly from across the room, hardly looking up from his book. “Because I like you as well.”

The green haired boy choked. “Wait, *what*-“

“So,” Kirishima said from his place on Bakugous bed, unable to stop the grin from forming on his face, “you really like me back.”

Said boy huffed from his desk chair. He was sitting on it backwards with his chin and arms resting on the back of it. It made him look quieter than normal. “I mean, yeah.”

Kirishima’s insides turned even gooeyer than before. He couldn’t help but blurt the words out - “I think I’ve liked you since I first saw you.

You were always so strong, and I really admired that, you know?"

Bakugou looked uncomfortable. "It wasn't like that for me. When I got to UA, everyone was just an obstacle for me. I saw this place as a tool and I didn't care who I had to hurt to get my way. But then you tore down my stupid walls and made me actually care about someone for once. I think I realized I loved you when you reached your hand out to save me."

Bakugou finally looked up at the end of his mini-rant before turning pink. "I mean, er-"

"You love me?"

". . . yes."

Kirishima realized his eyesight was turning misty as he stood and placed his hands on Katsuki's. "Good. I love you too."

Ok, don't freak out, Izuku told himself as he stared across the room at Todoroki. *Your crush just confessed to you under the effects of a truth quirk. Yeah, totally fine.*

"T-Todoroki?" he said, voice slightly shaking. "W-what-"

"I'm gonna give you guys some privacy," Shinso said from next him, and Izuku saw a trace of a smirk as he stood. And then he realized they were the *only ones left in the common room* -

Before he knew it, the elevator doors were sliding shut and it was just the two of them sitting alone in the almost-dark room.

Yeah. Don't freak out.

"Midoriya, is it ok if I come sit next to you?"

"Of course it is," Izuku replied before he even had a chance to think. This quirk really was something. He already had several pages in his notes dedicated to it - how it seemed to know the truth before you even had a chance to think of any lies.

Todoroki sat by him, and his weight made the couch dip down slightly so that Izuku was almost leaning on him, which totally did nothing for his "don't freak out" mentality.

Izuku took a chance and glanced up at the other boy, and found himself staring right into his eyes. And as red as he knew his face was, he couldn't seem to look away.

"I'm sorry," Todoroki said. "I didn't mean to say that so abruptly, it's just that with this whole truth quirk thing . . ."

"I get it," Izuku said as he looked down again. "I've said weird things too. Earlier today I told Tsu about my underwear being All Might themed totally unprompted . . . And I just told you. Totally unprompted."

Izuku wanted to die of embarrassment, but he heard - more so felt -

Todoroki chuckle next to him. “Very on-brand for you, I must say.”

Izuku chuckled too, before falling into silence - and oh boy, was that hard right now - and then tried to speak again very carefully. “Todoroki-“

“Shoto.”

Izuku blanched. “W-what?”

The dual haired boy looked a bit shocked even at his own words, but nevertheless spoke on. “Call me Shoto. I think we’re close enough for that.”

Now he knew his face was *definitely* red, but his mouth somehow opened on its own - “In that case, call me Izuku.”

Was Todo- *Shoto* red now too? “Alright, Izuku.”

Oh man, this was going to end badly, he just knew it-

But wait. Todoroki had already said that he liked him . . .

“So you do like me back?” The words spilled from his mouth before he could stop them. That was getting very annoying very fast.

“I already said - wait.” Shoto shifted to look at him better, his eyes widening in apparent shock. “*Back?*”

He looked up at him, into his two-toned eyes, thinking about that moment in the sports festival where he lit up and it was beautiful, but that somehow the dark common room made him look even more so, and said, “Yeah. Back.”

There was a moment where neither boy said anything, before Shoto laughed - really *laughed*, and man, if that sound wasn’t the most precious thing Izuku had *ever* heard - and no, there definitely weren’t tears in their eyes-

“I guess you were right,” Shoto said as he put a hand on Izuku’s cheek, and he suddenly became aware of how widely they were both smiling. “Something good might come from this quirk after all.”

Izuku was on his way to homeroom - hand in hand with his new boyfriend, which was incredible in its own right (breakfast had been a fun affair, with the announcing of the second new relationship of the first two days under a truth quirk)- when All Might in his now permanently smaller form came around the corner.

“Young Midoriya!” he said with a wave, before catching sight of him holding hands with the dual-haired boy. “I see the truth quirk has done some good, eh?”

Izuku immediately turned red, flailing his arms in an attempt to mask how flustered he was. He had to guess it probably wasn’t working. “H-hey All Might!” he said, his voice a little too high.

The hero in question simply chuckled. “Is it ok if we talk for a moment? Aizawa has already excused you from homeroom.”

It took all of Izuku's willpower to simply say "Sure thing!" and not the thousands of thoughts and concerns that immediately flew through his mind. He could only think of a handful of things All Might would want to talk about with him since he was under the influence of this stupid quirk, and none of them could be shared with the people he was currently with.

He turned to Shoto and gave him a quick kiss on the cheek and told him he'd see him in a bit.

"I really like it when you display your affection for me," Shoto said before turning bright pink.

"I'll be sure to do it more then," Izuku said automatically, also turning pink, before following All Might to the teachers lounge.

"I'm guessing this is about One for All and how it would be disastrous if I were to spill any information about it," Izuku said as he sat down on the sofa across from his mentor. "Also, that tie does not match your outfit at all."

All Might coughed harshly into his hand, clearly startled by Izuku's bluntness. "Man, they really weren't kidding about this quirk, were they?"

Izuku felt like a deer caught in headlights. "I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to say that out loud!"

All Might simply chuckled. "It's quite alright, my boy. But yes, that is precisely what I want to discuss with you."

Izuku sat back in his chair, thinking for a moment. If anything about One for All were to get out, it would certainly not be good. But he did trust his classmates to not say anything about it to the media or anything, that was for sure. Would it be that big of a deal if something were to slip out unintentionally? Oh, but if Aizawa found out, he was dead for sure-

"Now I wouldn't say that," All Might said. "Aizawa would certainly kill me before he even had a chance to look at you."

Oh. Had he said all that out loud?

"Yes, you did," his mentor said, looking far too amused.

"Sorry," Izuku said, rubbing the back of his neck. "I'm bad enough without a quirk forcing my mouth open all the time."

"You have nothing to apologize for," he said with a fond smile, before growing serious again. "I believe you are right, however. Any information getting released to the public due to this quirk would be disastrous, but I think you are also right in the faith you have placed in your classmates. I don't doubt every one of them will make wonderful heroes one day, and each of them has earned your trust."

Izuku let out a breath he didn't know he was holding, but he was still hesitant. "But what about your secret? Are you sure you would be okay with them knowing you weren't a natural born hero?"

All Might shrugged, and his eyes were somewhat distant as he spoke. "It's not my secret to tell anymore, my boy. You are the sole holder of One for All. Now, that being said, I wouldn't say anything unless you

can't help it due to the quirk. I doubt this is something you would want to get out if this quirk had never happened."

Izuku nodded, suddenly feeling a lot smaller, and the words poured out of his mouth before he had a chance to stop them. "I'm also worried they'll find out I used to be quirkless if the matter of One for All comes up. Most people . . . were less than kind to me when they found out about my status back then."

That was close enough to the truth, right? After all, he said it without any problems. He never really did tell his mentor the extent of the bullying, and he really didn't want to start now.

But even though he was very much going around the truth with what he just said, All Mights eyes seemed to soften, as if he knew all of the turmoil Izuku had gone through in the past. "I don't believe you have to worry about that with this group, but I understand your concern. Try to steer from conversations that would reveal anything."

"Oh, of course," Izuku said. "It's not like I'm gonna walk into class and say "All Might gave me his quirk," right?"

"Midoriya!" Iida said as Izuku walked into class at the end of homeroom. "How was your talk with All Might?"

"It was good," Izuku said with a smile, and-

"We talked about the quirk he gave me."

Well.

So much for that.

Chapter End Notes

Hello, welcome to my VERY self indulgent fic! I've been wanted to read something like this for so long and eventually I was just like screw it, I'm doing this thing. I really hope I finish this lol. It's my first work in this fandom so I hope I do it justice :P I'm gonna be diving into a lot of extrapolated canon and headcanons and also just straight up me shoving my issues onto my favs. This'll be fun

Also, look me dead in the eyes and tell me that my boy, my son, Izuku "I mutter in my sleep and scream ONE FOR ALL during fights" Midoriya would not blurt this secret out at the first given opportunity

I hope you liked the first chapter fluffiness because next chapter dives into some ✧trauma✧ Baby and it only gets worse :)

Thank you for reading! Pls leave a comment I feed off of other peoples approval

The Quirkless Kid

Chapter Notes

Trigger Warnings in end notes.

Also I'd like to say thank you for liking this fic so much? I wasn't expecting it to get so much love?? Thank you?!?

IMPORTANT I would like to point out that Aizawa wasn't hit by the quirk, I never explicitly said that but yeah it was just 1-A.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Everybody stared at Izuku, who just stared right back. The truth quirk must have been overloaded or something, because no one said anything. Yeah, so much information was probably firing through their brains that nothing was coming out of their mouths. Or they just stopped thinking all together. Either one.

The second one was happening to Izuku. He said what he said and he couldn't take it back, so his mind was now horrifically blank. And he definitely didn't want to think of the massive can of worms he had just opened, but alas, it was not meant to be.

"You . . ." Iida was still smiling, but it seemed frozen on his face, like once the sentence reached his ears he just . . . stopped. "What?"

Izuku felt like crawling in a hole and dying. "I feel like crawling in a hole and dying."

"Deku." Katsuki had his head firmly on the desk in what could have been exasperation or just pure defeat. "You *moron*."

"Problem child," Aizawa said as he stood, his hair floating and eyes glowing a dangerous amount, "I will give you one chance. *Explain*."

Izuku's mouth went dry, but somehow that didn't stop him from talking. "All Might's quirk was called One for All, and it's been passed down for generations. I'm the next holder, and it's why I was so bad with my quirk at the start of the year and why All Might lost his power."

Why don't you just go ahead and tell them every single embarrassing moment you've ever had in your life while you're at it, he thought to himself, *or that you're afraid of spiders, or that Kacchan bullied you, or that you used to be-*

A bunch of voices cut off his thoughts.

It seemed that the quirk could only be held off by confusion for so long, and soon everyone's voices were assaulting his ears, questioning Izuku and everything they had ever known about him.

Questions about how that was possible, what kind of quirk it really was, when he got it, if All Might broke his bones too, if Izuku had had to lie to them, or if he just chose to, and wow, that one stung-

"Enough." The stern voice of Aizawa rang throughout the room, and his matching glare somehow quieted everyone down. "Now, I know everyone is very . . . interested," he shot a pointed look at Izuku as he spoke, "with what Midoriya just revealed to the class. However, this is not the time for questions, as we are still in school.

"Although," he continued with blood red eyes that stared into Izuku's very soul, making him gulp, "I would like to ask a question of my own, if that's alright with you."

He was sweating buckets now. “Why do I feel like I don’t have a choice, sir?”

Aizawa smirked slightly. “So you do have a brain. Good. What I would like to know, then, is why you didn’t use that brain and inform me that you were unable to use your quirk correctly because you weren’t born with it. Just how long did you have it before the start of the year?”

Oh, great. He was dead. “I got it the morning of the entrance exam, sir.”

Gasps and whispers broke out throughout the room and Izuku had to fight the urge to put his face in his hands.

“Wait!” Uraraka suddenly yelled. “You hadn’t used it before you saved me from that robot?!”

Of *course* that would be what she would focus on - “Yeah, I honestly had no clue what I was doing.”

“Why then,” Aizawa said very calmly, “did you not say anything?”

Well, he and All Might had had a good run, right?

“I wasn’t supposed to, sir,” he said quickly. Just rip off the metaphorical bandaid. “It wasn’t my secret to tell, and All Might didn’t want anyone to know that his quirk was transferable.”

Did Aizawa's eye just twitch? "I see." He looked around the room, almost as if he were daring anyone to say anything - and honestly, everyone still looked too shocked to speak up. "Take your seat Midoriya. I suppose All Might and I will have to have a little chat after class."

As Izuku took his seat and tried to ignore the nineteen pairs of eyes following him, he desperately wished he could warn All Might of his coming demise.

After class was finally over, Izuku tried to make a run for it. He really, really did. He figured if he could get back to the dorms quick enough he could hide in his room to avoid any questions his classmates would ask him. Could he get permission to stay in his room for the whole month? No, that was too much.

But as he was packing up his stuff in record time, Aizawa's voice made him flinch. "Midoriya, please see me after class."

Izuku very pointedly avoided everyone's gazes as they left - well, except for Shoto, Uraraka, and Iida, who looked at him with a great deal of worry in their eyes. But Izuku just waved them off with a promise to meet back at the dorms.

But once everyone had left, Izuku made his way to his teachers desk with a sense of foreboding. "Look, sir-"

"I'm sorry you were forced to reveal that in front of the class," Aizawa said, much softer than before, surprising Izuku. "I also apologize for my rudeness. I know something like quirk status isn't easy to share. I was simply taken aback and ashamed that we didn't accommodate for your lack of experience correctly."

Izuku looked at him, mouth agape in shock. “It’s my fault for not telling you-“

“No, that’s All Might’s fault. And-“ he held up his hand before Izuku could defend the previous number one hero “-he had a responsibility to teach you as his protege that was more important than his secret. Even telling just me would have been enough, and I’m sure you’re well aware that I wouldn’t have said anything to anyone.”

Izuku nodded. “I understand, but he also valued his image as a natural born hero too much for me to have asked anything else of him. And I got it under control eventually, right? I was able to train with someone who knew about it during our internships.”

Aizawa huffed, seemingly considering his words. “I was wondering why you chose such a bizarre internship, even if that was your only offer. And I know you look up to All Might, and the trust you have in him isn’t misplaced. I simply believe he could have handled the situation better.”

Izuku sighed. Aizawa was right, if he was being honest. All Might could’ve shared his problem with more of the teachers. He could’ve been training more effectively, and maybe he would have even more control right now.

“I’m glad you think I’m right, problem child,” Aizawa said dryly.

Blinking in surprise, Izuku realized he had said all of that out loud. *Again.* “I’ve gotta stop doing that.”

His teacher simply chuckled. “At least you have an excuse right now.

Try and work on that now and it'll be easier when this blasted quirk wears off."

He gave him a determined nod. "I'll do my best, sir."

Izuku was hoping for some sort of miracle. Really, anything could've worked. He could throw up on the spot as soon as he walked in the dorms, and rush to his room claiming to be sick. All of his classmates could have suddenly been hit by a *different* quirk that would make them unable to speak, or maybe only able to speak Russian. He could spontaneously break his arm and have to go see Recovery Girl immediately. Actually, that last one might have been doable . . .

Unfortunately, though, none of these seemed to occur before he made it to the dorms - and he was walking very, very slowly, too. And, as luck would have it, all of his classmates were sitting in the common area. Obviously waiting for him. Except for-

"There you are," Shoto said, coming up to him from where he had clearly been pacing. He reached out and gave Izuku's hand a reassuring squeeze. "Are you okay?"

(Was it bad that he liked this version of his boyfriend more, who was more open and wasn't quiet out of fear of awkwardness or just plain fear?)

(Of course he loved every part of him, but he hated seeing how much Shoto struggled because of the things he couldn't control, like anxiety. Anxiety was a bitch.)

I'm perfectly fine, and I'm going to go up to my room now, he tried to say.

"I'm slightly panicking about this, but for some reason I don't really want to be alone right now."

He hadn't even realized it until he said it, but he really *didn't* want to be alone. If he was, he would certainly start spiraling and nothing good would come of that. This truth quirk knew him better than he knew himself, apparently.

(The thought was only slightly terrifying.)

"You can come sit with us, Deku," Uraraka said from her place on the long couch. She was sitting next to Iida, and between her and Tsu there was enough room for him and Shoto. "We'll try our best to respect your boundaries, right guys?"

A chorus of agreements rang out, and Izuku could tell they had discussed this before he arrived. It honestly warmed his heart that they would be so considerate of him. He was certain that they wouldn't hesitate to let him go up to his room if he wanted to, and oh boy, was there a part that wanted to, but-

But the thing was . . . was that he trusted them, just like he had told All Might. These people were his family. And he needed their support right now.

"Okay," Izuku said, shocked beyond all words that he was able to keep all that to himself. But still - "I trust you guys. You're like a family to me."

“Awwww! Midoriya!” Mina gushed from her seat. “We love you, too!”

Izuku couldn’t help the mistiness in his eyes at her words. He was still holding Shoto’s hand, and he subconsciously latched onto Uraraka’s as they sat down. “Y-yeah. Love you guys.”

The silence that followed wasn’t exactly awkward, but it was obvious that nobody knew quite what to say. Izuku definitely had no idea how to break the ice. What do you say when you accidentally blurt out one of your biggest secrets?

“I feel like we’re gonna be here a lot,” Shoto stated bluntly, cutting off the silence, “if this quirk continues how it’s been going.” A couple people chuckled at his meager attempt at starting the conversation with a joke. “I feel like we should set some ground rules now.”

“Like no asking direct questions unless the person gives explicit permission,” Kaminari said, before awkwardly rubbing the back of his neck. “As much as we can help it, anyway.”

“This quirk is really making your words work for you, isn’t it?” Kirishima teased.

Kaminari stuck his tongue out at him, but laughed nonetheless. “Yeah, you could say that.“

“But he’s right,” Iida said. “We should try to keep the questions to a minimum, especially when secrets come out. We should only be together if the person feels comfortable with it.” He glanced at Izuku. “Are you comfortable with us being here? You said you didn’t want to be alone, but if you wish we can limit this to a small group.”

Izuku shook his head, smiling despite his turning gut. “Honestly, you all already know most of the story. And like I said, I trust you.” He paused for a second, and took a deep breath- “And if you guys want to ask me questions, go ahead.”

“Are you sure?” Several people asked this and other variations of it at the same time, which made him smile even wider.

“Yeah, I am. Plus, I want everyone to know that we can trust each other, in case . . . something like this happens with anyone else.”

He let his words hang in the air, and everyone seemed to realize what he was saying: more people were probably going to reveal their secrets, and he wanted to set a good precedent of communication and support.

He was just gonna ignore the anxiety in his gut for now, he supposed.

“How did he give you his quirk?” Yaomomo asked almost immediately, causing everyone to stare at her.

Face red, she quickly spoke again. “I’m so sorry! I didn’t mean to sound insensitive! I’ve just been wondering, and once you said we could ask questions I just couldn’t keep my mouth shut anymore. . .”

“It’s okay,” Izuku said, giving her what was hopefully a warm smile. “If you mean the how as in the type of quirk it was? It’s a transferable type of quirk that’s been passed down for nine generations. And if you mean the transferring part . . . I ate a strand of his hair.”

Everyone stared at him.

“You . . .” Shoto was looking at him very strangely. “What?”

“I ate a strand of his hair. DNA transfer. Very anticlimactic, if you ask me.”

And as if a switch had been flipped, the tension in the room was gone, and it was replaced by twenty hysterically laughing teenagers. Even Katsuki was hiding a chuckle or two.

With the tension gone, the questions flowed out of everyone’s mouths easily. Izuku did his best to answer them all the best he could. No, All Might never broke his arms. No, he didn’t know who all had held it before, but he did know that the person that held it before All Might looked like his mother, apparently. Yes, he could transfer it if he wanted to. No, he didn’t want to. No, he wasn’t going to accidentally give it to Shoto by kissing him. (That question left him very red in the face, and he didn’t have to look to know that the other boy was red, too.) No, he didn’t seek out All Might, he just was sort of at the right place at the right time.

“That’s so lucky, though!” Mina said excitedly at that. “To think of the number one hero choosing you!”

Izuku looked down in thought. He used to think the same thing. That it was all luck, and he had almost nothing to do with it. Some of it definitely was luck, but a lot of it was on him, too.

He told them just as much, not really going into detail but still getting the point across. “All Might helped me realize that I really did put in a lot of work into being able to handle his power. I trained pretty much ruthlessly for almost a year and I still could hardly handle it. At least my arms didn’t fly off.”

“Man, no wonder you broke all your bones,” Kirishima said with a low whistle. “Your arms flying off makes what you did during the sports festival sound tame.”

“Yeah, that was pretty intense.” He glanced at Shoto, who seemed to be looking down guiltily. “And I would do it again if it meant you would still use your fire.”

“Wait,” someone said quietly, “why didn’t he use-“

“I have a question,” Tsu said, unknowingly cutting off whoever already talking. Izuku could feel Shoto relax beside him, glad that *that* wasn’t about to come up.

“Yeah, ask away,” he said a bit absentmindedly, still a bit worried about that particular topic being breached.

“What was your quirk before One for All, ribbit? Did it go away or did it somehow combine with All Might’s?”

One question not asked, but one that might have been worse in its place. Definitely worse for Izuku, at least.

(Well, better him than Shoto, he supposed.)

He almost shot a hand to his mouth to stop himself, but the quirk was too fast. “I didn’t have one. I was quirkless.”

And just like that, the tension in the air was back in full force, almost worse than before.

Actually, scratch that, definitely worse than before.

Izuku forced himself to not hyperventilate. So what if they knew he was part of the slowly dwindling minority of people? So what if they knew he was powerless most of his life? So what if his classmates knew he had been seen as worthless?

“I was really hoping no one would bring that up,” he couldn’t help but say as everyone either stared at him or very pointedly avoided his gaze. “I’m not sure how you guys’ll see me now, if I’m being honest . . . That was redundant to say, wasn’t it?”

No one laughed at the joke this time, and the air was just as thick, if not thicker.

“I didn’t know,” Uraraka finally said from beside him. He had forgotten that he was still holding her and Shoto’s hands. “So that time you saved me . . . That was your first time ever using a quirk at all?”

He felt himself nod. He seemed to be strangely detached from his body. Whether that was good or bad, he didn’t know. “Yeah. I was terrified, to put it lightly. But I knew I couldn’t just sit there, and my body just . . . moved on its own.”

Uraraka let go of his hand. He was about to ask what he had done wrong when her arms flew around him in a bone-crushing hug.

“Thank you for saving me,” she whispered, and was her voice a bit wet? “You’re gonna be a great hero, Deku. The *best*.”

And now his eyes were definitely not dry as he hugged her back. “Thank you. And you too. You saved me right after, remember?”

She giggled through her tears against his neck and just held him tighter.

“Quirkless people are statistically more likely to develop depression and anxiety,” Iida said quietly from next to them, though it rang throughout the whole room. Izuku felt his blood run cold. “They’re also more likely to be bullied and not reach the age of eighteen do to hate crimes and suicide.”

Izuku pulled away from Uraraka very slowly. “Yeah . . . I know.”

He looked at Iida, who was red in the face and had his hands clamped over his mouth. At Izuku’s questioning gaze, he lowered them and spoke. “I didn’t mean to say that out loud, I *swear*. I just . . .” He looked at him with something close to anguish. “I’m worried for you. You’re my *friend*.”

Izuku tried his best to smile. It was probably very strained. “It’s okay, Iida. It’s not like everyone here didn’t already know all that.” And it was true. They had studied quirkless statistics in their hero courses, because they needed to know how to “help those who couldn’t help themselves.”

Izuku kept his head down for most of that week.

It seemed that everyone else was remembering that he - someone who always participated in class discussions - had barely spoken a word during those lessons, and the worry on their faces deepened.

As if sensing the oncoming panic, Izuku waved his arms in what was hopefully a placating gesture and gave his best fake smile. “I’m fine now guys, really! I’m happy and I have all of you guys. And a quirk! I don’t know what else to ask for, really.”

“Now?” Shoto said quietly beside him.

Stupid truth quirk, making everything I say technically *accurate*, he thought bitterly, smile still on his face. “Yeah, I’m fine now.”

He tried to say it nonchalantly, like nothing was amiss, but most of the class was definitely smarter than that. They weren’t in the top hero program in the country for nothing.

“Meaning you weren’t okay before,” Tsu said after a moment of silence. She wasn’t ever one to beat around the bush.

“I guess you could say that,” he said in defeat, smile slipping off his face, knowing this conversation was happening whether he wanted it to or not.

“Did you ever try to . . . you know . . .” Shoto said from next to him, eyes very pointedly trained on the floor. He seemed to be trying very hard to keep his face blank. He never finished, but the hesitation even with the truth quirk made what he was asking clear as day.

“No,” Izuku said immediately. Tension left everyone’s body’s at that,

some of them literally releasing their held breaths. “But . . .”

The stress in everyone’s shoulders was back, and Izuku cursed this stupid quirk for the thousandth time. “I was definitely depressed. I didn’t really have a future.” He looked at his hands in his lap, closing himself off from the world as he spilled his deepest secrets, even deeper than his quirklessness. “I can’t say I never thought about it.”

Shoto and Uraraka instantly grabbed his shaking hands tightly as soon as he said that, and he held onto them for dear life. He could feel Iida’s hand on his shoulder and Tsu’s on his knee. He must have closed his eyes at some point, or they were too full of tears for him to see anything.

“You can go to your room, Midoriya,” someone said. He vaguely wondered how hard everyone was trying to stay quiet. “If you’d don’t want to say anything else. We can all leave, if you need us to.”

He shook his head, and he ignored his heart pounding against his ribcage. “It’s okay. It almost feels good to get this off my chest. I never told anybody, not even my mom.” The words were pouring from his mouth now, and he wasn’t sure he could stop them even if he tried. “I didn’t tell her about the anxiety or the bullying or the suicide baiting or the way the teachers looked at me like I was a pity project or the guilt about how my dad left and I thought it was my fault because he didn’t want a quirkless son. I never told her anything because I didn’t want to burden her.” He was struck with a sudden realization, and his stomach dropped. “And here I am now, shoving this on you guys-“

“*Don’t.*” Uraraka lifted his chin so he was looking her dead in the eyes. The same eyes that now had several tear tracks under them. “If you think for one *second* that we won’t support you with everything we have, then you can suffer nineteen hugs at the same time until you finally get it through that thick skull of yours. Maybe even twenty, if we can rope Aizawa into it.”

He snorted lightly through his tears. “I doubt he’d agree to anything like that.”

“Probably not,” she said with a slight smile. “But I know everyone here wouldn’t hesitate to throw themselves headfirst into helping you, right guys?”

A loud chorus if agreement rang throughout the room, as if it had been rehearsed. He looked around to see everyone giving him wide, tearful grins, and he couldn’t help but smile back.

“But you *are* okay now?” Iida asked him, worry ever present in his eyes. It looked like he had been crying as well, and Izuku’s heart broke a little.

He felt his smile slip away. “Relatively, yeah. I’m much better. I still get sad sometimes for like, no reason, and I’m still a little anxious at times. Getting out of bed is sometimes harder than it should be, too. And . . . being All Might’s successor can be pretty stressful, I guess.”

“I see.” Iida pushed up his glasses and looked down like Izuku’s weirdly specific answer was completely normal. “May I ask that you inform someone if things get bad again? Or tell one of us if you are feeling that way?”

He felt himself nod, and tears slowly filled his eyes, but he was able to keep them from falling. “If you guys want me to, I can. But I don’t want to be a burden or anything-“

“You’re not.” It was Shoto’s turn to gently turn his head and look into his eyes. “You aren’t and never will be a burden. We all care about

you, and we won't stop caring unless you become part of the League of Villains or something. Even then I think I'd follow you because I trust your judgment more than the hero commission."

That got a bit of a laugh out of Izuku again, and he watched as something softened in Shoto's eyes at the sight. "Noted."

"Please don't join them," Jiro said, sounding a bit frightened. "I don't think Japan would stand a chance."

Izuku looked at her in surprise, but everyone else seemed to jump on what she had said, saying he would be a terrifying force to recon with.

"Don't worry, that's not something I plan on doing. Trust me." He felt a bit touched though that they thought so highly of him. In a . . . weird way.

"You're so strong, Midoriya," Yaomomo said suddenly. "And not just with your quirk. You smile every day even though you've been through all that. You really will be a great hero."

More words of affirmation rang through the room, and once again Izuku couldn't contain his tears. "Thanks guys. That . . . that means a lot to me."

They talked for a bit after that, but soon Izuku was yawning and struggling to keep his eyes open. He only went up to bed at the insistence of his friends, because they knew he was coming down from an adrenaline high. Who knew spilling your guts could be so tiring?

He also told them all he would fine going up by himself, and that it wasn't even all that late so they shouldn't trouble themselves with him. They agreed reluctantly, if only because they knew he was being honest when he said he would be fine.

And he knew he would be, because he knew he was going to pass out as soon as he hit the pillow. Or, he would have, if there hadn't been knocking on his door as soon as he was ready to sleep.

He went up to answer it, and was surprised to find Shinsou standing there sheepishly.

"Hey, what's-"

"I'm sorry."

". . . What?"

Shinsou rubbed his arm awkwardly. "I wanted to apologize to you for what I said awhile ago. I'm sorry."

Izuku was drawing a blank. "I don't know what you're talking about." He winced at his own words. "Sorry, that was blunt."

Shinsou's lip quirked upwards. "It's okay. It was a while back. I mean during the sports festival, when I said you didn't know what it was like to be born with nothing and how you had everything handed to you in life."

He nodded slowly in realization before shrugging. “It’s okay, you couldn’t have known.”

Shinsou stared at him. “But it’s not okay. I assumed everything about you only based on what I saw in front of me. I was bitter about my own past and forgot that other people struggle, too.”

That was a lot to unpack for sure, but Izuku did his best to keep his mouth shut of any questions. If Shinsou wanted to share anything more with him, he would say something. He knew firsthand what it was like to have your secrets exposed.

But still, he appreciated his words enough to smile and force himself to speak carefully. “Thank you. I appreciate it, really. I forgive you, but I don’t really think there’s much to forgive. I understand.”

(Because he definitely did understand being envious of those born with more privilege.)

Shinsou hummed. “Thanks.”

They said goodnight to each other, and Izuku was on his way to his bed when another knock pierced through his room.

Slightly annoyed with the fact that he wasn’t able to sleep once again, he went to answer the door, but his heart melted at the sight of Shoto.

“I knew you were stretching the truth when you said you’d be fine,” he said. “I know you don’t like being alone.”

Izuku couldn't help but smile as he let him in. "Fine. You caught me. But I'm still going to bed."

"I'm tired, too. Wanna cuddle?" At that his face turned beet red and Izuku swore he could see steam coming from his left side.

"Sure," he said with a little laugh, face also red.

They got into bed together, and it was the most comfortable Izuku had been in weeks.

"I like you like this. Is that bad?" he said once they were both settled. They both faced each other, heads next to each other and arms around each other.

Shoto shook his head. "I don't think so. I like me like this, too."

Izuku hummed, letting his eyes slip shut. It was a moment before Shoto spoke again.

"I'm glad you told us. I never would have known."

Izuku shrugged, exhaustion trying its best to claim him. "I probably would have told at least you eventually. And I meant what I said. I'm mostly fine now. Plus, it's nothing really compared to what you went through."

“I mean, it was different. But we had a lot of similar struggles that I didn’t even know about until tonight. You didn’t have a future . . . I had one I couldn’t escape.”

Izuku’s eyes shot open. “*What*?”

Shoto had the *audacity* to laugh. “Now you know how I felt earlier.”

Izuku hit him in the chest before pulling him close. “That’s not funny.”

Shoto held him tightly, but nonetheless said, “It’s a little funny.”

“Nope. I won’t have any of your dark humor in my bed.” He pulled him closer and let himself tell the truth. “I’m glad you’re here.”

Shoto’s breath hitched. “I’m glad you’re here, too. Don’t leave me, okay?”

“I won’t. Don’t leave me, either.”

“I won’t.”

Chapter End Notes

Trigger Warnings: Mentions of bullying, depression, anxiety, quirkless discrimination, and minor past suicidal thoughts.

So this was fun to write! And by fun I mean very cathartic and gut wrenching. I was going to make Bakugou “Kacchan” in Izuku’s pov but it just sounded weird for the narration part, so I didn’t, I just said “Bakugou” and that also sounded weird, but

then I realized these two have known each other forever and probably would be on a first name basis so like,,, katsuki. Sorry if that bothered you, but as I said this is self indulgent to the max so □□

Also, Uraraka and Izuku friendship man. I love them with everything I have, they are just the best and if you disagree sorry to disappoint but sorry not sorry

And before you ask, no I am NOT done with this part and Bakugou WILL
have things to say. Lots of people are saying they want him to "face consequences" for what he did and I get that, but like he's a better person now, guys. Calm down.

I also just wanted to focus on the friendship for this chapter and not the angst because I wanted to do things one thing at a time because writing is like pulling teeth for me.

I loved every single one of your comments last chapter and I would absolutely love more!!!

Bakugou, Part One

Chapter Notes

> Trigger warnings for previous chapters apply to this chapter as well.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

So, it turned out that it was possible to not answer direct questions. It took a lot of will power, like when you've worked out well past your limit and you have to mentally push yourself to do one more set. It was pretty much impossible, though, when you weren't expecting the question - which Izuku realized during breakfast.

It was a nice affair to begin with. Nobody was treating him like he was made of glass, which he greatly appreciated. Everyone was being a bit nicer to him than normal, though, but he didn't really mind. It was . . . different. Much different than most people when they found out he was quirkless.

Different, but nice.

That is, until Shinsou slammed his hands on the table in front of him. "I love and appreciate you."

The idle chatter at the table stopped. Izuku stared at him, since his aggressive tone didn't match his words at all. "What?"

He huffed. "My stupid insomnia kept me up as usual, and mixed with how worried I was about you, I barely got any sleep."

"Sorry-"

“No. Not your fault.” He groaned, rubbing his face with his hands. “That was too much information. I was worried, but I was also up thinking about how much I appreciate a you as a friend and that I’m glad I got know you. I was also angry all night at the people who hurt you, but that’s less important.”

Izuku felt something warm fill his chest. “Thank you. I don’t think you understand how much I appreciate you saying that.”

“You’re welcome,” he said, face a bit red, obviously slightly embarrassed by everything he had just said, before adding almost as an afterthought, ”So who *did* bully you?”

Izuku’s mouth opened on its own. “Tsubasa Ito, Niko Takahashi, Bakugou Katsuki-“

He slapped a hand over his mouth, but he was a second too late. The damage had been done.

(Yeah. Questions asked that would catch you off guard were impossible.)

Everyone stared at him, and he got a strange sense of déjà-vu from he day before. The eyes slowly turned to the blond sitting a the table, who was glaring at the food in front of him like it had killed his family.

Izuku felt Shoto stand up next to him, and he felt a rush of panic hit his chest. “Sho-“

“Bakugou.” His voice was as cold as his ice. “Do I need to punch you?”

Katsuki stood up abruptly and started to march around the table. “Let’s go, half and half, you and me right now-“

“I’ll enjoy wiping that smirk off your face-“

“I’d like to see you fucking *try*-“

“Stop!” Izuku yelled, jumping up and physically putting himself between the two. “This isn’t going to do anything but get you guys in trouble!”

“Shouldn’t he be in trouble though?” Uraraka said, and she sounded *pissed*. “I think bullying is grounds for expulsion here.”

Katsuki rounded on her, too. “You wanna do over of the sports festival, Gravity Bitch-“

“I have a name and so does Midoriya!” Wait, she didn’t call him- “Maybe if you had a heart you would realize that!”

“Uraraka, you can still call me Deku,” he said, unsure of how to stop the building tension. “It’s my hero name.”

“Guys, calm down,” Kirishima said slowly. “We don’t know the full story here.”

Izuku breathed a sigh of relief. “*Thank* you, finally-“

“So what is the whole story?” Shoto asked, still looking just as angry as he had during the sports festival.

“He was a bully most of our childhood, mostly verbal but a little physical at times.” He flinched at his own words. “Wait, that sounded bad-“

“That’s because it is bad!” Iida had joined in now, clearly over his apparent shock. “Midoriya, you have to realize that it’s not okay-“

“I know it wasn’t okay! Of course it wasn’t! But it’s not like anybody ever told him to stop! The teachers and kids all practically worshipped him. He didn’t know any better.”

“That may be the case for when he was younger, but it shouldn’t have been an issue past elementary school,” Yaomomo said with a glare. “A moral compass would’ve kicked in by then.”

“I’ll fight you, too, Ponytail-“

“Kacchan, you’re not *helping*!”

“Maybe I don’t want to *help* myself, *Deku*!”

(And yeah, they all forgot about the truth quirk right there. Izuku would remember his words later and realize and mentally kick himself a hundred times over.)

“Good, because we don’t want to help you either! I can’t believe we ever thought you two were just old rivals!” Uraraka seemed to be out for blood at this point, getting right up in his face. “Why would you ever hurt someone like Deku?!”

Oh good, she was calling him Deku again. One problem down, a million more to go.

Katsuki clicked his tongue. “Lots of reasons. Maybe he was just that *annoying* -“

The slap rang throughout the room.

Uraraka was breathing hard. “Don’t talk about him like that,” she spat before walking back over to Izuku and Shoto.

Izuku just gaped at her. “What part of fighting will only get us in trouble did you not understand?!”

It was way more aggressive than he would normally be, but then again, they all were. Uraraka just gave it right back to him. “Are you seriously judging *me* right now!? Why are you defending him? How bad did it even get? What was the worst he ever did?”

And yeah, she definitely wouldn’t have asked that if she had been in her right mind, truth quirk or not. But she wasn’t.

“Physically? Breaking my arm. Verbally? Telling me to jump off a roof.”

The shock was almost tangible in the air. No one moved for a long time. Or maybe it just felt like a long time.

“Give me one good reason I shouldn’t report this to Aizawa.” Iida was physically shaking - whether it was from anger or distress, Izuku didn’t know.

His mouth almost didn’t want to work, but the quirk was actually a blessing for once. “He’s *changed*. He isn’t like that anymore. And I’ve forgiven him already.”

“Did he ever actually apologize?” Shoto said quietly. “Or are you just that kind?”

Izuku’s mouth felt dry. “No. He didn’t. But-“

“This kind of behavior shouldn’t be forgiven without an apology,” Iida said, almost looking disappointed in his friend.

“But-“

“Stop defending him!” Shoto yelled, before regret immediately filled his face as he realized he had yelled at Izuku. “I’m sorry, I just don’t think this is okay.”

Izuku huffed. “I’m feeling that from a lot of people. It’s honestly kind of weird. Our teachers never cared.”

“Wait, the school didn’t even do anything?” Uraraka asked incredulously.

Izuku really didn’t want to stir up the storm waiting in his friends eyes, but he had no control over the words that left his mouth. “Not really. The only time they did anything was when he broke my arm, and even then they just called his mom.”

He looked up, face red, to see everyone staring at him in what couldn’t be anything other than shock. The worst seemed to be Kirishima, who shifted to look at his boyfriend with wide eyes.

“Is all of this true, Katsuki?” he whispered.

Izuku felt his heart break a little. Because even though Kirishima knew full well that every single word that came from their mouths was the truth, he still didn’t want to believe it. Izuku didn’t want to believe it, if he was being honest. It really was horrible.

Katsuki shifted. He had been staring at the ground ever since Uraraka had slapped him. “Of course it is, you idiot, but when I broke his arm I was suspended for three days.” Oh. He hadn’t known that, since he had been out of school due to his arm. They were tight on money and couldn’t get a good doctor for a while. “And Deku, they called my mom more often than *that*.”

Kirishima flinched back at the harsh tone coming from the blonde, but still found his voice to ask, “. . . *why*?”

“I didn’t mean to break his arm . . . And it’s none of your business. Or any of you for that matter!”

Kirishima really flinched that time.

He soon backed off from the blond altogether before looking down and grabbing his bag from his seat.

“I’m going to class,” he muttered. And then he left, head still down.

Katsuki was definitely biting his lip, which meant he definitely wanted to say something. But of course he wasn’t going to, because he was Bakugou Katsuki, and Bakugou Katsuki was the most stubborn person on the planet. Stubborn enough to fight a literal truth quirk and win.

Soon everyone was leaving, until it was just Izuku, Shoto, and Katsuki, who still hadn’t moved.

“Are you coming?” Shoto asked, looking between the two.

“Yeah, but can I have a minute alone with Kacchan?”

Shoto sighed, like he knew this was coming. “Fine. This doesn’t mean I’m happy with your decision.”

Ouch.

Once they were alone, Katsuki finally stopped biting his lip.

“Don’t you dare apologize, nerd. It was going to come out. You can’t keep anything under wraps.”

Izuku rolled his eyes. “We should start walking now so we’re not late.”

Katsuki moved to grab his things, but he didn’t say anything else as he started walking out the door.

Izuku huffed in exasperation before rushing to follow him. “If you want them to forgive you you’re going to have to actually talk to them.”

“You can’t force me to talk, and this dumb quirk can’t either.”

“That doesn’t mean you shouldn’t talk to them!” Izuku got in front of him and started walking backwards, but of course Katsuki was avoiding his gaze. “Don’t you want Kirishima to understand?”

He exhaled almost in a way that could’ve been a laugh. “You say that like you understand.”

Izuku rolled his eyes again. “I understand more than you think. Associating with me would make you look weak. And you hate being weak.”

He almost laughed again. It was a moment before he spoke. “And what makes you think the others will believe you? And don’t say anything about this stupid quirk. You can say things that you think are true but are completely false, like when Kaminari said that the bushes in the front lawn were poisonous.”

“That is true,” Izuku said with a snort. “And they’ll believe me

because you're gonna back me up."

"What'd I say just now about thinking things are true?"

"*Ha, ha.* But seriously, if we both tell them the same story they'll believe us. I'll tell them about how I wouldn't leave you alone and you just had way too much pent up aggression for a five year old. I was almost a stalker, for crying out loud."

"A stalker?!" he asked, almost looking like he was about to start laughing hysterically. "Literally everyone followed me around. We were fucking children."

"Did everyone else take notes on you quirk, though?"

"You were just trying to practice your analysis. It's not like you felt like training physically would help you at all, since everyone told you how weak you always would be."

"I guess, but I could have at least picked up some weights," Izuku said quietly. "Sometimes I wonder if I was even serious about being a hero back then."

"Of course you were serious!" Katsuki yelled, surprising him. "You were just using that big brain of yours instead of your weak little body, even if I never realized it. You even told me that was the reason you could help me from that stupid sludge villain. And don't act like you didn't drop everything to train your ass off with All Might. You're literally the opposite of lazy."

"So you didn't mind my notes on you?" he genuinely asked, because

for some reason that stuck out to him the most - he had been the one to destroy his notebook, after all.

“I mean, it was a little weird. But you’ve always been weird, and you love quirks. That, and you just really admired me. I admire you, too, now. I’m glad we’re friends again.” Katsuki said these words almost absentmindedly - then turned bright red.

Izuku *definitely* wasn’t close to tears. Nope. He did his best to lighten the mood, knowing his friend was now majorly uncomfortable, even if he was telling the truth. The blond never really did the whole “emotions” thing. “It’s a good thing I ate that strand of hair, then, isn’t it?”

Katsuki let out a bark of laughter. “Whatever you say, Deku.” And then- “I know you already told me, but I just want to know for sure. You never looked down on me, did you?

Izuku casually wiped at his eyes. “Oh course not, Kacchan. You were my best friend.”

Katsuki turned away with suspiciously wet eyes. “Thanks, nerd.”

They arrived to homeroom just in time, and they noticed how everyone stiffened when they walked in together. Aizawa most definitely noticed, but didn’t say anything, and for that Izuku was grateful. They really didn’t need a mass confrontation right now.

“All right class, for today’s hero training you’ll be working in pairs. You pick, I don’t care. All Might is waiting for you at Ground Beta,

pick your partners before you arrive. Good luck," he said before promptly falling asleep.

As everyone started pairing off, Izuku noticed one very clear thing: everyone was avoiding Katsuki. So he turned to him and loudly said with a big smile, "Hey Kacchan, wanna be partners?"

A lot of the chatter ceased, and heads whipped around to look at the two of them.

"Tch, sure I guess."

Izuku grinned even wider. "Great!"

"Kirishima, do you want to be my partner?" Shoto asked, staring Izuku dead in the eyes. Izuku could feel his heart start to break into a million pieces, but he just kept smiling, and maybe bit his tongue to keep from speaking, too.

"Sure, man," the redhead said, far less enthusiastic than normal. He looked over at Katsuki, who just turned his head away.

Something hardened in Kirishima's eyes, and it had nothing to do with his quirk. "Let's win this."

Izuku saw Katsuki stand up next to him before getting right into his line of sight, looking him square in the face. "I'm only gonna say this once, nerd. We're winning this thing, or I'm gonna metaphorically blast your face off."

Even with the added “metaphorically” several people gasped at Katsuki’s sudden words of aggression, and looked very worried for Izuku’s safety. Like he was still a fragile, quirkless middle schooler.

Izuku just smirked and stood up, eager to prove them wrong. “I’m counting on it.”

They ended up winning the exercise. No surprise there. Everyone grudgingly congratulated them - meaning they very clearly stated that they were still very upset after their words of good sportsmanship.

“Fuck all of you except Deku and Shitty Hair,” Katsuki had said before heading back to the dorms alone.

Izuku sighed for what had to be the hundredth time that day before walking over to his friends. “He seems ticked. He also doesn’t want to defend himself to you guys.”

Uraraka turned and started walking away. “I don’t care if he defends himself or not. I’m not forgiving him.” And with that she was gone.

Izuku looked back at Iida and Shoto. “Are you guys gonna leave me, too?” And maybe this quirk was making him way blunter than normal, but he couldn’t bring himself to care.

Shoto blanched. “No, we’re not. It’s not you I’m mad at, even if I am a bit upset with your choices.”

Izuku opened his mouth to tell him that he could make his own decisions. Shoto meant well, but he didn't understand-

Wait.

Izuku's eyes widened as he realized something. He had to bite his tongue from blurting it out right then and there. It should have been obvious right from the start.

He turned to Iida and spoke carefully. "I'm gonna go ahead and head back with Shoto. We need to talk."

Shoto looked at him almost in fear at the dreaded traditional breakup words. Izuku could hardly blame him for seeming afraid - after all, he probably had a very angry expression on his face. Iida simply nodded and soon they were on their way to the dorms, away from anyone who could potentially eavesdrop.

Izuku broke the silence. "He's not Endeavor."

Shoto's head snapped up. "What?"

"Kacchan. He's not Endeavor."

Shoto scowled and looked at the ground. Izuku had hit the nail right on the head. "You know I can't deny that I've been thinking about it. They both were power hungry people that held too much over us. Why are you defending either of them?"

Izuku shook his head. “I’m definitely not defending Endeavor. He was a grown adult that made the decision to abuse his family. Kacchan was a child raised to believe he was better than everyone else in a society where I was expendable.”

Shoto winced at his words. “You’re not expendable.”

“I was treated that way, though,” he said as he kicked a rock. “And everyone else believed it. So for a kid with a powerful quirk to be seen as weak for even associating with me, it was clear what path he would take.”

“That doesn’t make it right.”

“Of course it doesn’t!” he practically shouted. “But it’s different. Kacchan realized his mistakes and is already trying to be better. Endeavor hurt you and your family for practically *decades* without a hint of remorse.”

Shoto glanced at him, not saying anything for a moment. Izuku was afraid he had gone too far when he felt a hand wrap around his own.

“You’re right,” he said quietly. “I know you’re right. I’m sorry. But I’m still upset with him.”

“It’s okay,” Izuku said, relief flooding his veins. “I know how hard it is to forgive the people that hurt those you care about. Like a certain dumpster fire.”

Shoto smiled. “I like it when you call him those stupid nicknames, you know.”

“Trash monster. Burning sulfur. Did you know that I thought burning trash was illegal, but then I met your sperm donor-“

His boyfriend was openly laughing now, and Izuku didn’t hesitate to pull him into a side hug as they walked. Shoto kissed the top of his head, and for a moment, everything felt right.

It was the first official movie night of Class 1-A’s truth-quarantine, and everyone was gathered in the common room talking animatedly about what movies they were going to choose. Well, everyone was there except a certain childhood friend of Izuku’s.

He couldn’t take it anymore, the way they were all just pretending he wasn’t there. So he stood up and made his way to the elevator, ignoring the protests from everyone else.

He knocked on Katsuki’s door, and when he received no answer, he just knocked harder.

“What’d’ya want?” Katsuki grumbled from inside.

“You’re gonna come downstairs and explain this with me,” he said matter-of-factly.

“And what makes you think I’m gonna do that?”

“Because I’m asking you to.”

“This is usually when I would say something sarcastic, but I can’t now. So I’m just gonna say you’re not funny.”

Izuku huffed before leaning against the door. He closed his eyes and let his mouth run, letting his emotions and the truth quirk overtake him.

“. . . I know you’re sorry,” he said quietly. “I don’t need to hear you say the words because I know you hate feeling weak. I know you’re trying to be better, too. And yeah, you did some really shitty stuff, but we were kids, okay? We’re *still* kids. I think everyone else forgot about that. We’re still learning and we’re gonna keep learning.”

No response. He almost kicked the door in frustration.

“I know you better than anyone here, Kacchan. Even Kirishima. I know you don’t want to admit you were wrong in front of everyone. But you’ve gotta do it eventually, or it’s gonna eat you alive.”

“What makes you think all that?” Katsuki asked. His voice sounded slightly choked.

“Well for one, I know you can’t stand not having Kirishima around, even if you won’t admit it. And the rest of your friends. You care about what they think of you, no matter how much you pretend otherwise.”

No sound was coming from behind him. Maybe he should try picking the lock-

He suddenly fell back as the door was opened, and he would have fallen right into Katsuki if he hadn't caught him and pushed him off. "Why were you leaning on my door?"

"Honestly? I thought it would take way longer to convince you."

His friend snorted. "Of course you did."

When the elevator doors slid open to the common room, chatter seemed to cease. Izuku realized that everyone seemed to be staring at him a lot, lately.

"Look," he said as he and his friend left the elevator. "I know you're mad at Kacchan, and for good reason. I just . . . Give us a chance to explain our relationship, okay? It's gotten better. I promise."

Nobody made a move to say anything, and Izuku watched as they all made questioning eye contact with each other. He met Shoto's eyes, and he saw him give a slight nod and smile. He sighed in relief, glad to have him on their side since he had talked to him earlier. Izuku wondered if his boyfriend had talked to the others while he was upstairs.

"Promises are kind of redundant right now," Jirou deadpanned when no one else spoke.

"I guess you're right," he said, glad that that was the only protest. "So, can we do this?"

He waited for them all to nod as he and Katsuki sat down, and he looked down at the ground with a sheepish smile. “I guess we should start at the beginning . . .”

And with that, Izuku began to tell the story of two childhood friends born into a society that valued strength over kindness. About how his classmates had all learned about his quirklessness and immediately turned their backs on him. About a horrible environment that pushed one boy down while raising the other one up. And how one of the boys thought the other was looking down on him, and retaliated.

“I know it was wrong of him, but I can’t be all that mad at him, can I? He was just like every other kid in that class. Our teachers pretty much encouraged the bullying from kindergarten up. I was always the instigator for the fights on official reports.”

“But that’s ridiculous!” Iida exclaimed. “How could the teachers lie on forms like that?”

“We didn’t all grow up rich, Glasses,” Katsuki cut in. “We were in a poor neighborhood. The school was prejudiced and fucking horrible.”

Everyone seemed surprised to hear Katsuki speak that way about the place that raised them, if only because it backed up what Izuku was saying.

“I wanna hear you apologize,” Uraraka suddenly hissed. “I get it. Our society sucks, and you thought he was looking down on you. But that doesn’t excuse the years of abuse you put him through.”

“I know it doesn’t excuse it,” Katsuki hissed right back. “I’m damn

well aware of that. And it's not even like that was the only reason I did it. I have so many excuses I could use but I'm not going to. I was a shitty person. Can't we leave it at that?"

"I still think an apology is in order," Shoto muttered.

"Guys," Izuku said slowly, "I don't need to actually hear him say it. It's okay. He hates apologizing, alright? It makes him feel weak-"

"Don't go *telling* them that, stupid nerd-"

"Well it does, so I'm not gonna let them hold that over your head."

"I'm interested in the other reasons you bullied him," Yaomomo said abruptly, crossing her arms. "And don't say something like "he was annoying" because that is simply unacceptable."

"I just said that to get you guys off my back earlier. He was pretty annoying though, and wouldn't leave me alone about my quirk - hey, what the fuck happened to no asking questions without explicit permission?!"

"I came up with that," Kaminari whispered excitedly to himself.

"But you're right," Izuku said with a sad smile. "I really didn't leave you alone about your quirk. I probably should've given you some space."

"So what other reasons were there?" Kirishima said, looking down like

he had been all day. “I just . . . I want to understand.”

Everyone else turned to look at Katsuki, interested but obviously apprehensive about what he was going to say. Honestly, Izuku felt the exact same way . . . What *was* he going to say?

Katsuki shifted, looking down at the floor uncomfortably. It was a long time before he spoke. “Part of the reason was because my quirk makes me have a low blood pressure, and my body has to constantly pump me with adrenaline to keep me conscious. I . . . had a lot of anger and nowhere to put it.”

Izuku blanched back in shock.

After all that had happened . . . *that* was one of the reasons why Katsuki was so cruel to him? Because he literally had to be angry to stay conscious?

Katsuki looked just as unnerved by his confession as Izuku was, if a bit flustered - as did everyone else. It was like everything they knew about the fiery boy finally - *made sense.* Of *course* he was always fired up . . . if he wasn’t, he might collapse or worse.

“Kacchan . . . I had no idea,” he said quietly.

Katsuki just huffed out something that was almost a laugh, but wasn’t quite there. “Yeah, well, I’m surprised, with all that note taking you did on my quirk.”

Now it was Izuku’s turn to be flustered. “Yeah,” he said with a small laugh. “I guess that I should’ve picked up on that.”

“Yeah,” Katsuki said somewhat awkwardly.

And then-

“I’m sorry.”

Izuku nearly fell out of his chair. “K-Kacchan-“

“I said sorry, alright? I’m not saying it again.” Katsuki looked down, suddenly interested in his shoes. “I might as well make the most of this damn truth quirk and say this before I lose my nerve. I never should have treated you like that, and I know my stupid anger isn’t an excuse or anything. It was wrong.

“And before any of you extras say anything,” he said with a glare, “I absolutely know that Deku is way too forgiving for his own good.” He looked back at Izuku. “So yeah. I’m . . . I’m sorry.”

He said it through somewhat gritted teeth, and a scowl was set on his face, and he was glaring daggers at him now, but-

But he meant it. This was one hundred percent real. He was sorry for what he had done to him, and Izuku got the apology he never thought he would get, so-

“Thank you so much,” Izuku said through the lump in his throat. “I think you know I’ve forgiven you.”

Katsuki clicked his tongue and looked away, but not before rolling his eyes in exasperation. “Of course you have, you idiot.”

Chapter End Notes

hides behind a table from all the discourse that is about to come blasting through my door

People give Bakugou a lot of crap for what he’s done in the past, like he hasn’t grown at all as a character. I disagree. And when people compare him to endeavor it just makes my blood boil. Like y’all really gonna compare a grown man to a child. And yeah he’s still a crude person but that’s what I love about him. But I also don’t like fics that have the characters brush off everything he’s done when they find out. They are going to be future heroes and I think they would be righteously angry on behalf of Izuku. Once they come to terms with it I think they would forgive him, of course, because he really has grown a lot as a character.

So this chapter is my official view on how Bakugou is as a character in canon - although obviously Izuku is too forgiving, but that’s just who he is as a character. I can’t see him being still angry w him bc of his past mistakes. He’s too nice. People will write him as this bitter old soul and I’m like?? Are we watching the same anime??? I get he’ll probably snap under the pressure some day but at the point in time I’m writing this he still has ✧optimism✧

SPOILERS for what’s coming- what follows later in this story about Bakugou’s past is not canon, but if it were to be I wouldn’t be surprised. Bakugou’s home life in canon is sketchy at best. This will be me exploring what his motivation would be like if it were worse. Like, a lot lot worse. If you’ve ever read the fic “Everybody’s Scared of Something” by kaigee, this is kind of loosely based on that. So, yeah. This whole fic is me just asking myself “how do I create the MAXIMUM amount of pain and suffering” so we have that to look forward to,, also who wants Aizawa to adopt Bakugou, anyone??

((Also fun fact I could only find one of his childhood bullies and only the first name so “Niko” means conquerer and Takahashi and Ito are really common Japanese last names so that’s cool ig)) ((If what I found was actually his last name pls tell me,, I am what they call,, very dumb))

I also have a lot of this written already guys and the tags reflect what's coming, so if you don't like certain tropes or characters just make sure you look at that. If you don't want to be spoiled don't tho!!

You're comments always make my day! Love y'all!

Conversations

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The movie night went pretty well after all that. The anger that had been harshly directed at Katsuki all day was just about gone after his apology, for which Izuku was so, so glad. He knew Katsuki was a better person now, and he was glad his classmates could see it, too. He was growing and learning to be the hero he had always wanted to be, which was beautiful and amazing and it made Izuku wondrously happy. He hoped it made everyone else happy, too.

The blond seemed to be nonchalant about this development, but Izuku could see the relief in his eyes as Kirishima moved over to let him sit down.

And no, Izuku didn't mean to overhear on the way to his seat, but he didn't have almost twenty hero journals because of his lack of eavesdropping skills.

"I'm sorry for hurting you," Katsuki muttered. Two apologies in one day? This was the proof he had changed, honestly. Izuku felt himself smile at the thought. Thankfully at this point no one else seemed to be listening, too caught up in movie picking again. "I understand if you don't want to be with someone like me."

"I know you're better now," Kirishima said with what sounded like a frown. Izuku was in his seat now, which was only a few seats away from them. So he could still hear everything. Maybe he shouldn't be listening-

"Can we talk about this later?" Katsuki grunted. "Alone?"

“Yeah, of course.”

Izuku breathed a sigh of relief. He did *not* need Katsuki mad at him for that one.

“So, what are we watching first?” Kirishima asked, putting an arm around his boyfriend. Izuku hid a smile behind his hand as he saw the blond lean against him with a well-hidden blush.

“Something classic,” Mina said with vigor. “Like Disney or Dreamworks.”

“I haven’t seen any of those,” Shinso said. “I didn’t watch many movies growing up.”

“*What*?” Kaminari yelled incredulously. “Were the people that raised you *monsters*?!”

“Well actually-“

“We have to watch a classic then!” Uraraka exclaimed. “Like Tangled or How To Train Your Dragon.”

“That one’s a good one,” Tsu said. “My brothers and sisters both like the one without the teeth.”

“His name is Toothless, but that doesn’t mean he doesn’t have teeth,”

Izuku said with a small frown, slightly upset with his friends not knowing these simple facts.

“I’m confused.” Shoto looked at him with a bewildered expression. “His name is Toothless . . . But he has teeth?”

“Not you, too,” he groaned.

“It’s official,” Mina said. “We’re watching it. Anyone who objects speak now or forever hold your peace.”

“Wait,” Kaminari said. “Which movie?”

“Were you not paying attention?” Katsuki said. “You were just part of this conversation.”

“I zoned out, I guess,” Kaminari said with a sheepish grin.

Mina waved her arms in the air. “Everyone shut up! I’m playing it. Movie time, no talking.”

But the problem was that the people who hadn’t seen this particular movie - Shoto, Shinsou, Tsu, and a few others - would normally not talk because they were either socially awkward or too considerate of others. But because of the truth quirk, Izuku found himself answering his boyfriend’s whispered questions every few minutes, and he could hear others doing so for the others as well.

“Hey Tsu,” someone asked at one point. “If your brothers and sisters

watched this, why haven't you seen it?"

"They're a lot younger than me," she said, not taking her eyes off the screen. "I usually put the movie on for them while I did stuff around the house. My parents both worked a lot so I was in charge of the housework and taking care of my siblings. It was hard."

Izuku looked over at his friend, who looked slightly red in the face as to what she had just said. "That's really admirable," he said after a moment. "I'm glad you're parents had someone they could trust to do that for them."

Everyone else was looking at her now, too, and someone had paused the movie. "Do you want to talk about it?" Uraraka asked softly from next to her, putting a hand on her arm.

Tsu shook her head. "Not really. I mean, sometimes it was stressful. But my brother is old enough to look after the rest of them now that I'm here all the time. If not, I probably would have left UA."

"But being a hero is your dream!" Uraraka said, obviously distressed at the idea of her friend leaving.

"I know that, but I care more about my family than anything else. I would've figured something out. But now I have the chance to sign with a good agency and support them."

Izuku watched as something began swimming in Uraraka's eyes. He knew exactly why.

I'll sign with a good agency and make make plenty of money. Then I'll be

able to let my parents have an easy life.

It felt like they were all intruding on a moment between the two of them, but no one had the heart to say anything.

“I know how you feel,” she said, smiling sadly. “I’m going to do the same thing for my parents. That’s why I really wanted to become a hero in the first place.”

“I know this probably isn’t the best thing to say right now,” Yaomomo said with a slight blush, “but I want to apologize for anything I may have said in the past about my family’s wealth and how I take it for granted. And really, I would trade that wealth for a family like either of yours. I don’t remember the last time I spoke to my mother or father outside of a scheduled appointment.”

Uraraka blanched back in shock. “Yaomomo-“

“Sorry, that was rude of me,” she said with a very forced laugh.

“No, not that!” Uraraka exclaimed, before realizing her outburst and speaking softly. “I mean the thing about your parents. That’s horrible.”

Yaomomo shrugged, like this was no different than discussing the weather, but her eyes told a different story. “It’s not like I have many opportunities to see them now, anyway. I much prefer the company of all of you.”

“Awww, Yaomomo!” Mina squealed. “We love you, too!”

“I’m glad I got to know you two,” Tsu said. She smiled widely as Uraraka brought her in for a hug. “I’m glad I got to know all of you. I’m glad I get to be here.”

Hagakure and Mina both jumped up and made an almost inhuman noises of joy, joining the hug. “I love you guys!” They both said at the same time.

“Yaomomo. Jiro.” Uraraka said sternly. “Get over here.”

They both awkwardly joined the group of girls hugging each other, and Izuku found himself smiling. He loved the girls in their class and how close they all were, even if there weren’t many of them.

(He almost found himself frowning, wondering if the hero course was sexist somehow. But that was a question for another time.)

“Are we gonna keep watching the movie?” Shoto whispered in his ear, or at least tried to. It was much much louder than he probably meant it to be, making all of the girls sweat drop.

“Sorry!” Mina said. “We just got caught up in the moment right there. Let’s keep watching.”

“‘Bout Time,” Katsuki grumbled. “I wanna see them crush the big dragon. It’s my favorite part.”

The movie started playing again, but Izuku was more focused on holding in a snicker when he saw Bakugou’s face turn pink from what

he said.

They watched a couple more movies after that - a few Disney, a few superhero movies from the pre-quirk era (and man, were those fascinating to watch, he could talk about those for hours). By the end of one about, according to Shoto, “a big purple guy looking for space rocks,” everyone was about ready for bed.

“I’m gonna head on up,” Ojiro said, and other people muttered their agreements.

Izuku felt himself yawn. “Yeah, you ready for bed, Shoto?”

He yawned too. “Yeah.”

“Wait guys!” Mina said in surprise. “Are you sure you don’t wanna watch one more?”

“We’re all tired and we have school in the morning,” Iida said sternly, robotically moving his arms like usual. “It would be wise to try and sleep now.”

“We’ll have more movie nights,” Uraraka reassured. “We can watch more then.”

“But I’m not ready to go to bed yet!” she almost whined.

“You can stay up in your own room,” Tsu said. “But we’re tired.”

“I’m tired too! So if I go to my room I’ll fall asleep!”

“Isn’t that a good thing?” Kirishima said, standing up. Katsuki grumbled something about losing his pillow and stood up too. “We do have class tomorrow and it’s already after midnight.”

“It’s not a good thing, because then I’ll have really bad nightmares just like always!” she said before slapping a hand over her mouth.

Everyone that had been walking away turned back around abruptly, clearly at a loss for words.

. . . Mina had nightmares? Izuku could understand nightmares. He definitely had them from all of the stuff they had been through together, but they weren’t constant like she was implying hers were. All the times she had pleaded with them to stay up longer finally made sense.

Come on guys, one more round!

I bet you double or nothing!

We can stay up a bit longer, right? If Aizawa can sleep in class so can we!

“How often do you have them?” Kirishima asked softly.

Mina looked like she was going to start crying, but with an

encouraging nod from Kirishima, she slowly lowered her hand. “Almost every night,” she whispered. “I don’t understand why. I haven’t even been through as much as you guys but no one else talks about having them. Is there something wrong with me?”

“Of course not,” Kirishima said, slowly approaching her. “I have them too. I think we all do. I dream about the USJ and the training camp and about Katsuki being kidnapped.”

“Well you went to rescue him,” she said with a slight sniffle. She crossed her arms indignantly, like she was mad at herself. “And you all were sent to fight villains in the USJ. I was just stuck at the front. And I bet you don’t have them every night.”

Kirishima winced. “No. I don’t. They’re more of a two or three times a week thing.”

“I think we all have nightmares, Mina,” Uraraka said quietly as she went up and took her friends hand. “I don’t think you can go through what we have without getting any.”

Mina groaned, plopping back down on the couch and pulling Uraraka down with her. “I guess I should’ve realized that . . . but no one else ever said anything. I thought I was going crazy or something, and I’m almost scared to go to sleep at this point. I’m just dragged back there, where you guys are all dying in front of me and I can’t do anything to stop it.”

Mina’s head shot up and her face turned bright red. “Wow, *hello* oversharing.” She whipped around and looked right at Izuku, and he almost stepped back in surprise. “Is this how you’ve felt this whole time? Because this *sucks*.”

Izuku found himself laughing weakly. He wondered how many more people would find themselves in their position by the end of the month. “Yeah, it’s pretty rough.”

“Ugh,” Mina said. “At least I’m not alone . . . but I still get them way more often, apparently . . .”

Kirishima sat down next to her and started rubbing her back. “Maybe you should talk to Aizawa if they’re this bad. He could get you help. We’re only gonna go through more stuff as pro heroes.”

“God, don’t remind me.”

“I have them pretty often, too,” Katsuki said awkwardly, surprising everyone - especially Mina, if her wide eyes and hanging jaw said anything. He sat down across from her and crossed his arms, glaring at the ground. “You’re not . . . alone in this. I swear, every night that handsy bastard stares me down like I’m still gonna join his emo boy band. It’s annoying as fuck.”

Mina started to tear up again. “I can’t believe I’m complaining about my stupid nightmares when you literally got *kidnapped* by the *League of Villains*-“

“Don’t do that,” Katsuki snapped. “You can’t compare trauma like that. Just because I went through something shitty doesn’t mean you didn’t. You’re allowed to have feelings.”

Everyone looked at him like he had grown a second head.

Katsuki’s eye twitched. “I hate this *stupid quirk*-“

“Thanks, Bakugou,” Mina said with a wobbly smile. She was the only one not staring at the blond like he had been switched with some weird clone. “I appreciate that.”

Something in Katsuki’s eyes softened. “No problem, Mina.”

Mina mock gasped. “Did everyone hear that? He said my name! Not Raccoon Eyes!”

“I will fight you.”

They ended up having a giant sleepover in the common room. Nobody really wanted to leave after all they had talked about. They stayed up late into the night, talking about everything and nothing all at the same time.

The problem was that they ended up staying up way later, and they ended up sleeping in since all of their alarm clocks were in their rooms.

Meaning none of them showed up for class - not even Iida, who usually had a perfect internal clock.

Aizawa was so, so tired that morning, so when he walked into his homeroom class to see absolutely none of his students, he walked right back out.

They ended up not getting into too much trouble for their late-night impromptu sleepover. Aizawa was furious at first, but when Mina stepped forward and shyly explained that they had done it all for her, something in his eyes had softened.

They were definitely softer when she informed him and everyone else that she'd had no nightmares that night. Everyone was so relieved and thrilled, and Aizawa eventually gave permission for the girls to take turns spending the night with her from then on.

That didn't stop Iida from profusely apologizing for his "lack of leadership skills" and whatnot, but he also defended his classmates with the fact that they couldn't have used their phones to wake themselves up, since they didn't have them anymore.

Aizawa simply rolled his eyes, but not without hiding a smile beneath his capture weapon.

It was later during their hero training where Izuku screwed up. He liked to think it wasn't his fault - they were all tired from their lack of sleep the night before, so everyone was a little off. Even Katsuki was sloppy with his movements as they attempted to save dummies from a building set to collapse.

Of course, Izuku being himself, he was so worried about the "hostages" that he didn't notice everyone else was out of the building and it had already begun to collapse. Because of course it would actually collapse, because UA didn't know the meaning of the word subtle.

He woke up in a hospital bed. This much he was used to. He was also used to his friends at his side asking him worried questions about how he was feeling, and he was used to lying to them about how he felt fine. What he wasn't used to was the stupid truth quirk.

"I'm really tired and sore," he said when Uraraka asked him how he was doing. He immediately groaned in frustration. "I hate this."

"I don't," Shoto said nonchalantly, picking at his nails. "You can't brush us off anymore. It must be a nightmare for you, though."

"Midoriya, you need to be more careful," Iida said from his side. He looked tenser than usual. "As I've said before, when you end up in situations like this it only reminds me of my brother, and how I don't want you to have the same fate."

Izuku stared at him. He remembered Iida saying something similar when Katsuki had been kidnapped, but he had thought it was only the adrenaline and drive to keep them from going that made him say it. But now, when he was pretty much fine with no impending danger . . .

"Do you think that all the time?" he couldn't help but ask. "Are you really that worried about me?"

"Of course I am," Iida said. "You've become like a brother to me."

Izuku smiled, trying not to let tears form in his eyes. And of course he was failing, as per usual. "You, too."

The day continued on, as did the rest of the week. But it wasn't quite normal - the truth quirk was still there, so everything was . . . slightly to the left.

Not everything that came out of their mouths was some world-altering secret. They blurted out their random thoughts while talking to each other, and it made for some very . . . interesting conversations.

"So wait, you've never killed anyone in Among Us?" Uraraka asked with a frown.

Izuku looked down sheepishly. "No. I can't bring myself to. When I'm the imposter I kinda just wander around and wait for everyone to complete their tasks. Killing them makes me feel mean."

Shoto stared at him with a blush. "You're too pure, you know that?"

"You know you could beat everyone without breaking a sweat as the imposter, right?" Uraraka asked.

"Oh yes, I'm very aware."

"Can I borrow your shampoo?" Sero asked Kirishima, who was sitting at a table doing homework. "I'm all out."

“No, mine’s special for my hair dye.”

“Wait,” Bakugou deadpanned. “You dye your hair?”

“You guys didn’t know?” Mina said, sounding surprised. “You can see his roots before he dyes it like every month.”

“Mina, you knew me before I started dying it. That’s cheating.”

She stuck her tongue out him.

“What color is your natural hair?” Bakugou asked, looking at him intently.

“Black,” he said, running his fingers through it. “They blend into the red so the roots aren’t all that noticeable.”

The blond hummed and kept looking at him for a moment. “I like your hair like this, by the way,” he said, almost as an afterthought. “But I’d like it any way you want it, I think.”

He turned bright red, and when Mina started a long, drawn out “aw” he yelled, “Shut up! You metaphorically didn’t hear *anything*!”

Mina and Sero started cackling at that, and his face just turned even redder, almost matching Kirishima’s hair.

“So let me get this straight,” Aizawa said, pinching the bridge of his nose. “You know that you need at least five thousand calories a day because of your quirk. And you’ve known this for a long time.”

“Yes,” Yaomomo said.

”And you would like to eat that much, but your parents have you on a strict diet.”

”Yes.”

Aizawa looked either ready to take a nap and never wake up or go kill a man. “Well, since you’re in the dorms now, you’re UA’s ward, and therefore my responsibility. I’ll have Lunch Rush make you a new meal plan to help ease you back onto a healthy diet.”

Yaomomo looked shocked, and somewhat close to tears. “Thank you, sir.”

“I’m just saying, Bakugou is the most rebellious person in our class,” Kaminari argued.

”I don’t know, he’s never tried to kill someone for vigilante justice,” Midoriya said.

“Wait,” someone said. ”Who tried to *kill someone for vigilante justice*?!”

“Are you really french, Aoyama?”

”But of course, mon ami! Why would you think otherwise?”

”Well . . .”

“Wait, you like classic rock?” Jiro asked, her face pink.

“Yeah, and rock and roll,” Yaomomo said, putting a finger to her chin. “You were the one that introduced me to those genres, actually. I was raised on classical instrumental music.”

Jiro turned around and shouted “That’s cool!” before briskly walking away.

Yaomomo was left to wonder what all that was about, since she couldn’t see the other girl’s face turn even pinker. That didn’t mean her own face wasn’t flushed, though.

“I own *six* All Might plushies, and-“

“Yeah, well I own *twenty*, you fucking *nerd*!”

“I wish I was allowed to own an All Might plushie,” Todoroki said sadly off to the side of the battle for the title of Ultimate All Might Fan, and Uraraka just nodded her head in sympathy.

“Why don’t you ever wear a tie?” Kaminari asked.

Bakugou looked at him oddly for a moment. “I don’t like things around my neck.”

“So the opposite of a choke kink,” Sero said absentmindedly from across the room.

Kirishima spit his drink everywhere.

Sero looked up, fearing for his life. And rightfully so.

There was a day during combat training where Shinso and Aizawa were standing next to each other with the same expression on their face.

Todoroki stared with a calculating expression.

His boyfriend noticed and immediately put his face in his hands. “Shoto, I *swear*, not *again*-“

“You’re favorite hero’s not even Japanese?” Kaminari asked with a bewildered stare.

Sero shook his head. “Nah, mine’s this really cool spider-themed hero from America. He swings around just like I do!”

“Is that his quirk?” Izuku asked.

“No, I think his quirk is something like Tsu’s - he can do anything a spider can, basically. Like stick to walls.”

“What’s his name?” Kaminari asked.

Sero smiled widely. “Peter-Man.”

“Of course I care about all of you!” Bakugou yelled from the kitchen at his stupid squad. “Why else would I make you dinner and help you study when you clearly don’t take the classes seriously?!”

”Bakubro!” Kaminari yelled. “That means so much!”

”Did you guys actually think I hated you or some shit?!”

”I mean, not really,” Mina said. “But you are pretty aggressive.”

“That’s just who I am,” he said, a bit softer than his normal anger-filled tone. “I might not be the best at showing it, but I care.”

He proceeded to yell at them when they all immediately tackled him in a group hug, and they only let go when he said, ”You’re gonna make me burn the chicken, idiots!”

Kyoka was really starting to not like this quirk. It made her blurt out the most ridiculous things at the stupidest times, made Kaminari actually make sense for once, and had caused her to almost blurt her feelings out to her crush.

Yaomomo - or Momo? Were they close enough for that? - had admitted her favorite music genres earlier, and that would have set her mouth off if it hadn’t been for her running as quickly as she could in the other direction. She had probably left the other girl so confused. Good job, truth quirk.

Maybe this wouldn’t end badly? After all, Bakugou and Kirishima were just fine. Well, aside from Bakugou’s entire past being brought to light. Yeah, Kyoka would like to avoid something like that.

Midoriya and Todoroki had also started dating, right? They were happy.

(Aside from Midoriya later revealing that he had All Might's quirk and had been quirkless and therefore ruthlessly bullied and depressed. You know, usual conversation material.)

It wasn't like confessing was a prerequisite to spilling your guts, but it didn't have a good track record. Of course, Mina and Tsu had also shared their own problems . . . But she didn't want to risk it.

But Kyoka didn't have any baggage like that, right? Nothing that could accidentally come to light if she were to confess, either to Momo or the class, right? The closest thing she could think of would be her dad's drinking problem, but even then it had always been minor and ever since she got into hero school he had been doing his best to get better, and had now been clean for months. If anything she was really proud of him.

Her insecurities about being a hero? That could come out, too, she supposed, but it wasn't like she doubted herself all the time. She was pretty sure everyone - with maybe the exception of Bakugou - was insecure at times about their future as heroes. With such a competitive job market it was to be expected, and she didn't really think it would make her cry in front of everyone or anything.

Oh, who was she kidding? The only reason she was really thinking about all this was to distract herself from the real reason she didn't want to confess - Momo didn't like her back. Why else would she not have confessed her undying love to her yet?

(Maybe Kyoka was being a tiny bit dramatic.)

(Of course, she hadn't confessed either, so . . .)

(This whole thing was a mess.)

All of these thoughts scrambled her brain as the first week with the truth quirk passed. She was terrified that her thoughts would blurt right out of her mouth when she was least expecting it. Thankfully her usual calm demeanor kept anyone from asking her questions of the emotional type, so at least she had that going for her. However, Momo wasn't part of her typical friend group, so she wasn't prepared for her to approach her that Thursday afternoon in the hallway.

"Are you avoiding me?" Momo had asked her, her voice small and sad. It was something she never would have asked normally. "Did I do something to offend you?"

"No, I just like you more than a friend and these feelings are making me nervous around you," she said.

And immediately died inside before bolting.

And now here she was, sitting in her room, trying to do her homework as she tried not to think about how much she had just screwed herself over. She really had to go and say that like a complete moron. She knew her life was basically over.

That is, before there was a knock at her door. Actually, scratch that, her life was *definitely* over now. She held in a groan as she stood from her desk and made her way to the door.

And promptly froze when she saw her standing there.

"Momo?" Kyoka said on instinct before turning bright red. "Wait, I mean Yaomomo-"

“It’s okay,” she said, face pink. “Can I call you Kyoka?”

It was so sudden and unexpected that she didn’t even notice the deepening of both their blushes. “Of course.”

She felt like her brain was melting as they both stood there, staring. Neither said anything for the longest time but neither of them seemed to take any notice.

“Do you want to come in?” Kyoka finally said, brain still trudging through molasses as she opened the door wider and started to head to her desk. “I can play us some-“

“I love you.”

Kyoka was pretty sure she got whiplash from how fast she turned around. “*What*?”

If anything, her exclamation just made Momo more nervous. “Oh, that was such an inappropriate thing to say, I’m so sorry-“

“It’s okay,” she said, finally finding her voice. And now that she had found it, the truth quirk made her unable to stop. “I love you, too.”

The dark-haired girl looked at her with wide eyes. “Well.” She cleared her throat, trying to sound like she had everything under control. Kyoka found it endearing. “I’m glad that’s settled-“

She let out a startled yelp as Kyoka pulled her in for a tight hug. “I’m so happy right now,” she couldn’t help but say before nuzzling her face into the other’s neck. “Like, unbelievably happy.”

“Me too,” Momo said with a giggle that made it obvious that she was drunk on love. “I was so upset when you ran away from me earlier because I didn’t get to tell you that I felt the same.”

Kyoka felt a pang of guilt. “I’m so sorry-“

“No, *I’m* sorry,” she said, pulling away and looking straight into her eyes. Kyoka felt unbelievably vulnerable and loved every moment of it. “For making you feel like I didn’t feel the same. And it doesn’t matter anymore. I had to wait like, an hour. So what?”

It was Kyoka’s turn to laugh lightly. She took Momo’s hand and kissed her knuckles. “Guess we have one more couple to announce to the class, huh?”

Momo actually looked sheepish at that. “Actually . . . I might have told them I was coming up to confess . . . And that you had already confessed to me.”

Kyoka leaned back her head and groaned, making the other girl - was she her *girlfriend* now? - laugh in earnest. “Of course you did.” And she couldn’t help but add - “Can I kiss you?”

Momo’s face turned red, and Kyoka started to instantly regret asking, but Momo answered her before she could say anything else.

And Momo didn’t answer with words, which was perfectly fine in

Kyoka's opinion.

She smiled against the girls lips, and thought that maybe this truth quirk wasn't so bad after all.

Chapter End Notes

tw: nightmares, adorable lesbians

Welcome to headcanon territory!! I have lots of them can you tell ✧

So this was a bit of, not filler, but a bit of more of the tamer/ domestic side of the truth quirk before we jump right back in to everything blowing up in everyone's faces.
I named this chapter "conversations" because this chapter is just a whole bunch of conversations. Lots of communication and we're here for it.

Also, me when I started this fic: I am not going to make this romance centered. This is gonna be mostly found family and a bit of Kiribaku and tododeku on the side
Me now: *uses the word "boyfriend" every chance I get and I guess "girlfriend" now too*

ALSO the part where Izuku has never killed anyone in among us is based off of an among us game I played once where the green player was "Deku" and was the imposter and refused to kill anyone. I knew because we had become friends and they vented right in front of me. When everyone else found out they were like "let him live" lol. I was Todoroki btw, most fun I've ever had lol. If you're that Deku reading this then hi!! I miss u

Also did I base Yaomomo's parental relationship on Adrien Agreste's? The world may never know

Useless

Chapter Notes

tw in end notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kirishima - as well as everyone else - had gotten pretty used to the truth quirk by the end of the first week. Yeah, it was still pretty weird when they couldn't stop their mouths from opening half the time, but really, it wasn't as bad as they thought it was going to be. It was only the first few days that everyone had been sharing their deepest darkest secrets.

Hopefully that was over.

Kirishima had been scared when the topic of dying his hair had come up, but he had forced himself not to say anything. (Katsuki's compliments on his hair certainly hadn't helped distract him, of course not.) He had also been scared Mina would say something, but she didn't - she simply poked fun at him just like she always did. Maybe she didn't realize how low his self confidence had really been in middle school.

But he was better now.

. . . right?

"Hey guys, who do you think has the coolest quirk?" Kaminari asked the boys in the locker room that Friday after school was over. They had been doing specialized quirk exercises that day, so of course someone was going to ask. Someone almost always did, but since they

couldn't lie . . . it was a more weighted question. "Like, mine could be so cool if I could actually control it half the time."

"Well, it terms of control, I think Kacchan wins," Midoriya said, causing the boy in question to smirk triumphantly. "He's insanely talented."

"What about Todoroki?" Kirishima asked.

Katsuki snapped around and shot him an murderous look. "Eh?! You think Icy Hot is better than me?!"

Kirishima waved his hands frantically to calm the boy down. "No, that's not what I meant at all! I just find it weird that he wouldn't pick his own boyfriend, that's all! You're both super strong!"

"Of course I think Shoto's strong," Midoriya said with a blush. "I've just looked up to Kacchan's strength my whole life, so I'm a little biased. Plus I was talking about control, and no offense Sho, but you've still gotta work on your left side."

Todoroki nodded, face as blank as ever. "I'm aware."

Midoriya turned red when the words he had just said registered. "That sounded *so* rude, I'm so sorry-"

"Don't worry, it's fine." Todoroki gave him one of his rare smiles. "I love your analysis, even if it's about me."

“You two are disgusting,” Katsuki said.

“Don’t act like you and Kirishima aren’t the exact same way,” Ojiro said. “You hang on him every movie night, and then some.”

“I know training is over, but I can still kick your ass, Tail Boy.”

“It’s Tail *Man*-“

“I know, but my nickname’s better. Anyway, it doesn’t matter. My quirk is the best and Ei’s is right after mine.”

“Of course you would pick *your* boyfriend,” Kaminari teased.

“I don’t think so,” Kirishima said quietly, making everyone look at him. He tried not to crumple under their gaze, but kept on talking regardless of how much he wanted to shut up. “Katsuki would be first, and I think Todoroki would be next, then Midoriya, compared to the start of the year at least, then Iida.”

“But your quirk has a wide variety of uses!” Iida said with certainty. “I don’t think Bakugou was incorrect to state that you have some of the best control of your quirk in this room.”

“Yeah, and it’s a good thing we’re not including the girls.” Kaminari shivered like he was thinking of something frightening. “Yaomomo would win hands down.”

“That’s fair,” Todoroki said. “But yeah, Kirishima, your quirk is very

applicable."

"But it's not all that heroic or helpful," he said, hardening his hand for a moment before staring at his regular skin. "Neither am I, for that matter. My quirk and my personality aren't all that flashy. I don't think I'll be that good of a hero. Under all the hardening I'm pretty useless."

Kirishima's head snapped up after his unprompted words registered in his mind. "I, uh-" *Crap, crap, crap-*

"I'm leaving."

And without even looking at the others, that's exactly what he did, as fast as he possibly could.

How stupid am I? he thought to himself. *I mean, really.*

I didn't even put my shirt back on before leaving the locker room, he thought as he yanked a random T-shirt over his head and changed into pajama pants. Because damn it, he might've been sad, but he wasn't about to be sad and uncomfortable at the same time.

(Maybe he was spending too much time with Mina.)

He thought he was more self confident compared to middle school. And he was, right? He had said "I don't think I'll be a very good hero" and not "I don't think I can be a hero at all." That was an

improvement.

He realized then that this quirk didn't stop you from lying to yourself.

He managed to escape the locker room without anyone following, and get to the dorms before everyone else did, so he was able to escape to his room and hide there for what would hopefully be the rest of the night. He did his best to distract himself, doing homework that wasn't due until that Monday.

At least, he tried doing the homework.

He stared at the page in front of him and tried not think about what his words earlier meant, but to no avail.

He had thought that during that stupid raid he had overcome something inside of himself and become more of a man, but it was more of a bandaid over a bullet wound. Strip away his hardening and he was still just a weak kid. When the moment to save someone came he didn't know if he would charge in headfirst or freeze.

He stared at that stupid piece of paper for so long that he didn't realize he had skipped dinner. He hoped that the girls didn't know about what he had said by now, but he knew that was wishful thinking. Even if the others hadn't wanted to share, one question would've been all it took to get them to spill. And considering his absence, it was obvious they would ask.

What would Mina have told them if she found out? Would she tell them about how he dyed his hair to stand out more? Or that he froze when the lives of their former classmates were on the line?

A knock at his door startled him out of his thoughts.

He ignored it at first, but then they knocked again five times louder. He had one guess as to who that could be.

He reluctantly opened the door. “Hey.”

“You skipped dinner.” Katsuki’s voice was quiet, so unlike his usual tone. “Everyone was worried about you.”

That definitely wasn’t something he would say normally, so Kirishima couldn’t help but smirk. (Definitely not to distract himself from his growing panic, never.) “It’s nice to see you so caring.”

He watched the blond’s cheeks heat up, and almost regretted his words. “Well, it’s not easy for me to be all nice and shit. You and all the extras are so good at it.”

Kirishima’s jaw dropped at the admission. Here he was, concerned about his secrets getting out, and his boyfriend was spilling his guts to him at his doorway. They still hadn’t even spoken about what happened earlier in the week. Kirishima had been waiting for the blond to bring it up first, but based on how uncomfortable he looked now, he obviously didn’t want to talk about it.

“So are you here to force me to eat?” Kirishima asked, making an extreme effort to change the topic.

Katsuki looked at him almost gratefully before shooting him a glare. “That’s exactly what I’m doing, you idiot. We’re also doing another movie night tonight. We’ll probably watch even more, too, since it’s

Friday. They sent me to get you."

Kirishima began to turn around to put his stuff away. "Well, let me just-"

"Do you really think all that?" Katsuki asked with a low voice. His eyes were downcast, and his mouth was set in a grim line. "All that stuff you said in the locker room. Do you really believe it?"

"Yeah." Kirishima couldn't stop the words from coming out if he tried. He could feel his heart pounding as if it were trying to escape his chest. "I couldn't say it if I didn't think it."

"Ei-"

"Let's just go downstairs," he said, attempting to push past him through the doorway. "I don't wanna talk about it."

"You know everyone else is gonna hound you, too," Katsuki said, putting a hand on his chest to stop him. "I might be bad at confrontation, but there are people down there that will grill you until you spill just about *everything*."

Kirishima remembered everyone doing just that to Katsuki earlier that week, and he couldn't help but wince. "Yeah, you're right about that."

"So, talk to me." The blond almost looked constipated and it was almost funny. "I'm so bad at this. But I'm . . . I'm *trying*, okay?"

“And I appreciate it,” Kirishima said as he grabbed the others hand off his chest and started pulling him down the hallway to the elevator. “I don’t really know what to say, though. I used to be really self depreciating, and I’m better now, but I’m still not all that self confident. Is that what you wanna hear?”

It came out a lot harsher than he meant it to, and he felt horrible since Katsuki really was trying and he just threw attitude back in his face, but thankfully his boyfriend was fluent in the language of bitterness. “I guess. But I want to know how I can help. I care about you.” He almost gagged at his own words. “This quirk. I swear to All Might himself. If this quirk makes me sound all sweet and shit *one more time*-“

Kirishima laughed. “I happen to like you soft.”

“That is gross.”

They walked out of the elevator without too much of a shock wave going through the room, since they were all focused on picking movies again. But Kirishima definitely noticed heads turn their way when the doors opened, to which he awkwardly waved before following Katsuki into the kitchen.

“I saved some noodles for you,” he said as he shoved a plate into his hands. “I had Sato heat them up so they should be good to eat. There’s chicken in there, too.”

Kirishima felt his mouth water at the sight. “It was your night to cook, right?”

Katsuki smirked. “You know it.”

“I love you.” He took a bite. “And your cooking,” he said through a mouthful of food, so it sounded like “a’ ‘our ‘ooki’.”

“And you said Izuku and I were bad,” Todoroki deadpanned from the table.

“Shut your trap, Icy Hot!”

“You’re all disgustingly sweet,” Kaminari said with a wide smile as he poked his head around the corner. “We’re starting the movies now.”

For every other movie night before it had been Katsuki tucked into Kirishima’s side - that’s just how it happened, he supposed - but tonight it was the other way around. The blond put his arm around him in a way that made him feel warm and safe. If this was how Katsuki had been feeling all week, he couldn’t help but feel a tiny bit jealous.

He hoped they could just enjoy the movies and nothing about what he had said earlier would come up, but that was about as likely as Bakugou admitting to being bad at fighting. It was inevitable, really. Put twenty truth-prone teenagers in a room and one of them was bound to say something eventually. Kirishima just wished he had a bit more time to catch his breath before all hell broke loose.

And of course - *of course* - it was Mina that spoke first.

It was during the credits of the second movie. By this point they were getting more tired, so the talking between scenes and such had gone

down. It lured him into a false sense of security, because of course it did. He didn't even notice her pause the movie, too busy sleepily tracing the veins on Kasuki's arm.

"Kirishima," she said quietly, "Do you really think you won't be a good hero?"

He was wide awake now, and the pounding in his chest was back in full force as he turned to look at her, practically frozen. "I don't know," he answered honestly. "Sometimes I feel like I will be, like when I do well during training and in class."

"That's not a real answer," Katsuki said gruffly.

Kirishima felt his cheeks heat up. "The quirk let me say it, so of course it is."

"Not necessarily," Jiro said with a frown. "We can say half-truths if we try hard enough. And I think you're trying very, *very* hard." She punctuated that last part with a glare in his direction, and he found himself struggling to breathe for a moment. Was it really hot in here or was it just him?

"Guys, give him some space," Kaminari said. "I thought we all agreed to not ask questions unless the person said it was okay."

"It's all right," Kirishima said with a wave of his hand. He could do this. Communication was important and it took a lot of guts, right? He had to be able to do this. "I don't want to wimp out or anything."

"This isn't about you 'wimping out' Kirishima," Mina said, and she

sounded close to tears. Since when had that happened? “This is about if you feel comfortable talking to us about all this.”

He looked down at the ground for a moment before giving her a small smile. “I guess you’re right. And I am. Comfortable, I mean.” He rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly. “It’s like Midoriya said a few days ago. I trust you guys like a second family.”

He felt Katsuki’s arm tighten around him, almost protectively. “Good,” the blond said. “We wouldn’t let you deal with this on your own anyway.”

Kirishima chuckled in spite of himself. “I figured as much.”

“Did this start in middle school?” Mina asked. “When that monster almost attacked my friends?”

He looked at his hands and wrung them together awkwardly. “I mean, yeah. Back then my quirk was super weak anyway, but I thought my spirit could make up for it. But then that happened and . . . I froze. Something horrible could’ve happened if you hadn’t stepped in and I would’ve just been a helpless bystander.”

He didn’t need to look up to know that everyone’s gazes were drilling into his head. It was obvious that Mina had told them about it earlier, and he wondered if they thought he was a coward yet.

“I’ve frozen before,” Midoriya said suddenly. Kirishima looked up at him with wide eyes. “Back when I didn’t have a quirk. This giant sludge monster was going to attack me and I didn’t move in time. I would’ve died if All Might hadn’t saved me.”

“That thing attacked you too!?” Katsuki suddenly yelled, now at the edge of his seat and gripping his armrest tightly.

The others looked between the two rivals in confusion. Midoriya just shrugged. “Yeah. All Might caught him, actually, but because of me he got away and was able to attack you.” His head then shot up and he slammed his hands over his mouth.

Kirishima looked up at Katsuki, who was just staring at Midoriya with wide eyes. “You blame yourself for me getting attacked, don’t you.” It wasn’t a question.

“Hey!” Uraraka exclaimed. “It wasn’t his fault! How dare you-“

“I didn’t say *I* blamed him, Pink Cheeks, I just said *he* did!”

“You don’t blame me?” Midoriya whispered, slowly lowering his hands. He looked genuinely shocked, and honestly, with Katsuki’s temper Kirishima could hardly blame him.

Katsuki clicked his tongue. “Of course not. I mean, you probably did *something* stupid, but if All Might caught him then it should’ve been his responsibility to not let him go.”

Midoriya looked down, seemingly embarrassed. “I guess you’re right.”

“But you didn’t freeze later that day,” Kirishima found himself saying, causing everyone to turn to him in confusion. “It was all over the news. Some kid got attacked by a sludge monster and another kid rushed in to save him. That was you, right?”

“Yeah, that was me and Kacchan,” Midoriya said, looking down. “My feet literally moved on their own. All the heroes yelled at me for being stupid, except All Might. That’s when he offered me his quirk.”

He looked up at Kirishima with a red face. “That wasn’t helpful, was it.”

“No, not really.” He winced at his words. “This stupid quirk makes me sound so rude. I hate it.”

“We all feel that way,” Jiro said with a smirk, “except for Bakugou.”

Katsuki started yelling some sort of profanities at her, but Kirishima wasn’t really listening. When Midoriya had been faced with a life or death situation in middle school, he had acted without even thinking. He himself had pleaded with his own body to move, but nothing had worked. He was a coward, and he was never meant to be a hero like the rest of his classmates, he was sure of it-

“That’s not what I’m saying at all!” Midoriya yelled almost angrily, but he mostly just sounded disappointed, which everyone knew was always worse.

He looked around to see everyone staring at him and he belatedly realized that he had said all of that out loud.

Whoops.

“Yeah, whoops,” Katsuki deadpanned.

Kirishima felt his face heat up again. “I know that sounds bad-“

“That’s because it is, dipshit.” The blond turned so he was looking him dead in the eyes. He almost got lost in the amount of emotion they held, so rare to see on his usually impassive face. “Remember what the nerd said when he spilled his guts about his quirk? He trusted all of us and came to us because he wanted other people to feel comfortable doing the same. You’re coming to us now so we get to support your depressed ass.”

“I take it back,” Jiro said strangely. “You are somehow so nice yet a complete jerk at the same time.”

“What’s it to you?!” he yelled, turning to her and letting a few sparks off his hands. “I’m allowed to be complicated! And I’m allowed to say that you, Kirishima Eijiro, are the strongest person I’ve ever met in my life and I’m lucky to have you!”

Kirishima stared at his boyfriend and tried to ignore the tears that began to gather in his eyes. “How are you so aggressively nice?”

“It’s a gift,” Jiro said, snickering. Bless her for keeping things light, or he probably would’ve been breaking down right then and there. She probably knew it, too, if the soft look in her eyes was anything to go by.

“As class rep, I’m wondering if we should bring this to the attention of Aizawa,” Iida said seriously. “He might be able to help in ways we can’t.”

Kirishima felt his blood rush to his ears in terror. “I really don’t want

to tell anyone else."

"But this is a more serious issue than you just being sad sometimes," Yaomomo said with a frown. She was looking at him almost like he was a little brother to her. (He wondered if she had any siblings, but he doubted it because of what she had said the other day about her parents.) "It sounds a lot like you have undiagnosed depression. Is this how you feel a lot of the time?"

He looked down, shrugging a bit. Why did his friends always have to get right to the heart of the issue? "I mean, yeah. I feel better than I did in middle school, but not all that much."

(That didn't mean he was *depressed*, though, right?)

(He realized it made a lot of sense, and felt his heart drop in defeat.)

"Aizawa might be able to help you get counseling from the school or some sort of therapy," Iida reasoned.

"I really don't want to tell him," Kirishima said again.

"Please?" Mina said, and, *oh god*, she was actually crying now. Kirishima felt like a bullet was suddenly ripping through his chest when he saw the tear tracks on his friends face. "I know you don't want to, but I think it would really - really help you. And I don't-" she hiccuped, leaning on Jiro who started to rub her back "-I don't know how we can help you not *hate* yourself, Kiri."

I don't hate myself, he wanted to say.

But that would've been a lie.

He harshly blinked back tears. "What would I even say to him? *Hey Mr. Aizawa, I'm sad, please send help*?"

He felt a wave of relief as Mina laughed weakly, even if he knew for a fact she had caught what he didn't say. "Sure," she said, wiping at her eyes despite the tears still rushing from them. "Why not?"

"At least think about it?" Katsuki said in a voice he wouldn't have been caught dead using at the beginning of the year.

Kirishima sighed. "Fine. I'll think about it."

"Good." His boyfriend then wrapped his arms around him in a hug. He froze in surprise at the sudden display of affection, but melted into it not a second later. "You're too good to feel bad about yourself."

"He's right, Kiri," Mina said with a smile, wiping the new tears from her face once more. "You're brave and talented and we all love you!"

"You'll be one lit hero someday, that's for sure," Kaminari said, nodding his head solemnly like he had just bestowed wisdom on all of them.

"You're the man, bro," Sero stated. "You're the manliest man. The manliest, man-est, man-y-"

“He gets it,” Shinso grumbled from off to the side. “But yeah.” He looked uncomfortable, but still managed to look him in the eyes and smile. “You’re a great guy, Red Riot.”

Kirishima looked down and tried to hold back his tears, but with no luck. His heart was still beating loudly, but not with anxiety - something much more . . . calm. Like love and relief that they didn’t think he was a waste of space.

“I love you guys,” Kirishima said, trying not to choke on a sob, his grip tightening on Katsuki’s shirt.

A chorus of affirmations and compliments rang throughout the room, and all Kirishima could think before the dam broke was, *No wonder Midoriya cried so much.*

It wasn’t so bad though - especially with everyone else crying, too, and Katsuki’s arms wrapped tightly around him. In his embrace - and now all his friends’, too - he found the strength to smile.

It was after their movie night - in which everyone in the Bakusquad had been surrounding him on all sides, making him feel safe and warm and *loved* - that he and Katsuki walked back to their dorms together hand in hand.

“Are you gonna be alright?” Katsuki asked. Kirishima didn’t think he would ever get used to him being this openly nice. He guiltily hoped it would last after the quirk wore off, even though he knew it made him uncomfortable to be so vulnerable.

“I don’t know. Probably not, but I don’t want to inconvenience you,” Kirishima said before face palming and letting out a loud groan. “I just *had* to say that. Now there’s no way you’ll leave me alone.”

“Do you *want* me to leave you alone?”

“No.” The response was immediate, and Kirishima felt his face heat up for what had to be the hundredth time that night.

He saw Katsuki smirk and died a little bit from mortification. “I might not hate this quirk as much as I thought.”

Kirishima stuck his tongue out at him. “You’re mean.” He opened the door to his room and stepped inside before sighing. “I’m exhausted.”

He then fell straight onto the bed.

Midoriya hadn’t been kidding about the adrenaline crash.

He had already been wearing pajamas for the movie night, so he didn’t hesitate to get under the covers and almost pass out right then and there. And he would have, if it wasn’t for his boyfriend still awkwardly standing by the door.

“Come here,” Kirishima said, already half asleep, “Hug me.”

He was too tired to see the blond blush, and next thing he knew he was climbing into bed beside him and hugging him tightly. For a while, they just laid there in peace.

“I like it when you’re nice,” he found himself mumbling, but he was too tired to stop the words or even care about what he was saying. “I like all the different parts of you, n’ stuff, but I don’t like myself a lot so you’ve gotta do it for me, even when the stupid quirk doesn’t make you anymore.”

He felt Katsuki hum. “Is that so?”

“Mhm,” he said, snuggling closer.

He felt him laugh a little against his chest, but it somehow almost sounded sad. “I’ll be sure to keep doing that, then. For as long as you need it.”

He was at the edge of sleep when he felt a kiss to his forehead and heard whispered words.

“I’d hate myself twice as much to take away your self hatred. You’re too good for me, you know that? You’re just. Pure fucking sunshine.”

“That’s, uh . . . That’s Kaminari’s nickname,” he muttered into the pillow, only half-listening. He was just so comfy, hugging his big pillow of a boyfriend that held his head close to his chest. He could hear the blond’s heartbeat there, and it was much more soothing and interesting than whatever words were being exchanged.

He felt Katsuki laugh lightly against him once more, almost like he was looking at something precious. “Whatever you say, Ei.”

He then fell asleep, and when he woke, he didn't remember their conversation at all. And he definitely didn't remember the single silent tear that had landed in his hair.

Shota could tell there was something up with his students that Monday. It was obvious - they way they all glanced at each other throughout class and fidgeted like there was no tomorrow. It was bound to happen - this whole truth quirk situation would make them all face things they didn't want to face. He wondered what had happened this time.

The last thing he had heard of was Midoriya telling them all about his quirk, and Shota wasn't stupid - he looked up his old records and found that before the entrance exam he had been registered as quirkless. (And man, did Yagi get an *earful* from him that day.) That probably explained the tension in the room the next day, but it had been gone the day after. What else could've happened over the weekend?

He wasn't prepared to find out, certain his students would stay stubbornly quiet, but as they were packing up their things a shadow fell over Shota's desk. He looked up to see Kirishima standing there, if a bit awkwardly.

"Sir, can I-" he cleared his throat and rubbed the back of his neck. "Can I . . . talk to you?"

It was at that moment he realized the rest of the room had gone quiet. He really wasn't sure what to think now. "Sure, we can talk in my office."

Kirishima nodded jerkily.

Shota thought that would be the end of everyone's strange behavior, but as they were leaving they all called encouragement to the redhead.

"You've got this bro!" Sero said.

"We love you, Kiri!" Mina said, making a heart with her hands.

"We believe in you!" Midoriya exclaimed.

"I'll be waiting outside the school for you," Bakugou said, and Shota wasn't sure *what* to make of the soft tone the boy was using. He was proud of him, of course, for being open, but it opened up a whole other can of worms.

This obviously wasn't them all being mad at each other. That left a whole other range of issues it could be, and none of them looked good. And when he finally sat Kirishima down across from him on the old couch he liked to sleep on, he couldn't say he was too shocked to see the tears in the boy's eyes.

"Talk to me, kid," Shota said after a moment of nothing. "I want to help you."

Kirishima nodded and quickly wiped at his eyes. "I'm sad, please send help."

". . . I'm sorry, what?"

Kirishima smiled a bit in spite of himself. “Sorry, I just . . . It’s what Mina said I should say.”

And with that, Kirishima started to talk. It was hard listening to his unfiltered thoughts on his own self worth, knowing he never would be this open normally. Shota was ashamed to say he hadn’t been expecting one of his brightest students to be so depressed - even if it was seemingly well-managed - but in retrospect, it was obvious. The way his smile wasn’t genuine half the time, or how it slipped completely when his friends stopped looking.

He put a hand on Kirishima’s shoulder. “I’m glad you told me,” he said softly, not commenting on the silent tears on his student’s face. If anything, the sight almost made tears well up in his own eyes. “I’m technically qualified for counseling, and if you ever need to talk, I’ll be here. I can even set you up with something more official, if you would like. We have therapists right here on campus.”

Kirishima looked up at him with wide, frightened eyes, and for a moment Aizawa wondered if he was too forward, but then he said, “I’m not sure . . . Can I think about it?”

“Of course,” Shota said. “I know something like this can be frightening, but you’ve done the hard part. Even if it was because of a quirk, you said something. And that takes true bravery.”

Kirishima looked at him. A light that wasn’t there before shone in his eyes. “You really think so?”

“I do.”

“So how’d it go?” Katsuki asked as soon as Kirishima stepped out of the building.

“It went okay, I guess,” he said without even having to think about it, for obvious quirk related reasons. “He told me he could get me counseling, or that I could even talk to him.”

Katsuki hummed, looking down as they walked. “What’d you tell him?”

“I told him I’d think about it.”

He hummed again, almost like he was contemplating something - which could’ve been true. Even if the rest of them were at the mercy of this stupid quirk, he was probably stubborn enough to keep his mouth shut when he wanted to. “I think you should do it.”

“Well, I know you think-“

“I think you should because he’s already helping me.”

Kirishima stopped dead, and to say he literally froze in his tracks would’ve been an understatement. “You . . . He’s what?”

“He’s helping me,” Katsuki said, surprisingly grabbing his hand and pulling him back along. “I’ve asked him to help me out with like, anger management and all my other shit. It’s been going on for a while now.”

Kirishima couldn't stop staring at him. He felt something inside of him . . . he wasn't sure. Glow? It was a good feeling, that was for sure.

He loved him. So, so much.

"I'm really, really proud of you," he finally said, not surprised when his voice came out slightly choked up. "That's really good. Like, really really good."

"I'm aware. That's why I'm doing it."

"And you, uh-" he stopped to wipe his definitely not-wet eyes with his free hand. "You said it's helping?"

He saw him smirk slightly, his endearing oh-so Katsuki way of saying *I know what I'm doing, and I've got it all under control.* "It is. Which is why you should do it, too. I believe in you."

And damn, was it Katsuki's mission just to get him to cry? He had to deflect the conversation, and fast, or he was going to become a sobbing mess all over again. "And you're talking to Aizawa and not one of the others?"

"Oh, like hell I'd talk to some random shrink," Katsuki said with slight disgust, making Kirishima unexpectedly laugh. "Aizawa's really, really good at this stuff, trust me. And he knows us, too. He's almost like some sort of . . . I don't know, father figure?"

Kirishima snorted. "If Aizawa's your dad, you must have a pretty

weird home life.”

(He was too busy laughing to see Katsuki stiffen ever so slightly beside him, before forcibly relaxing. He wouldn’t realize until later how close he had been to uncovering the truth.)

(The horrible, *horrible* truth.)

“Whatever, Shitty Hair,” he said with a huff. “Just tell me you’ll think about it.”

“I will. Honestly, you’ve almost convinced me. I just don’t know if I want to do it with this stupid truth quirk.”

“Yeah, I’d say no. We’ve stopped for now since I asked him to, but I am reading this stupid self help book he gave me that we’re supposed to talk about when this is all over. It’s annoyingly helpful.”

Kirishima couldn’t stop the wide smile from forming on his face when he leaned over to kiss the other’s cheek. “I love you, you know that?”

“I love you, too. But you missed, idiot.”

Kirishima was happy to aim correctly this time.

Chapter End Notes

tw: depression, self worth issues, self depreciation

Kirishima: if you don’t have your own anime protagonist hair store bought is fine

low key just realized how much I make Kiri cry in this fic... lol yolo

The Boy Born with Nothing

Chapter Notes

tw in end notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shoto wasn't entirely sure how to feel about this quirk.

On one hand, it could be *really* annoying. When he normally would keep his mouth shut, it instead forced him to open it at the most inconvenient of times. Sure, he was normally a very blunt person, but he liked to think he was also a considerate person. This quirk was making him question that.

However, this quirk was also the reason he was dating his crush. So . . . points to the truth quirk.

It was also the reason he now knew how much Izuku had struggled in the past. It was just like him to listen to Shoto talk about how horrible his upbringing had been, but still not say a word about his own. It was one of the things he loved about him - he was so caring and selfless when it came to others - but it was also one of the things he hated about him. He never cared about his own well-being.

Shoto didn't believe in fate, but he knew that something had to have pushed them together. How else could he be so lucky as to be able to love someone as amazing as Izuku? It didn't make any logical sense. Things didn't work out for Shoto Todoroki. Maybe this was all a cruel trick; they would live together after graduation, content with each other and the life that they would build, and it would be ripped from him just when he started to get used to being happy. Izuku could be fatally wounded in the line of duty and he would be alone all over again, like he had never left the cold halls of his father's house.

Or he could just realize how much of a mess he really was and just leave.

And now, because of the other night, Shoto had even more fears to add to his ever-growing list. Izuku had been depressed and slightly suicidal. That was the thing he feared most now - that he would snuff out his own light when least expected.

He would go back and relive his childhood a thousand times over to keep that from ever happening.

(It also explained how self-sacrificing he was. Shoto shuddered at the thought.)

It was just that Izuku was so caring and compassionate and open all the time, truth quirk or not. It was endearing, the way he spoke his mind and encouraged everyone around him no matter what. He loved him for it - being so loving and inviting when he himself was used to being closed off for his own safety.

Of course, with the truth quirk, it was more of an . . . issue.

“That piece of trash can die, for all I care.”

. . . Especially when Endeavor was suddenly brought up in the dorms.

In a more private setting, it would have made Shoto laugh. But now, with everyone staring at the two of them, and Izuku now looking at him with wide eyes, it just made him freeze in terror.

Everyone was obviously shocked by the words that came out of the greenettes mouth, as something so violent was usually not his go-to - and aimed at the number one hero, no less. They were in the middle of some Disney movie, but someone must have paused it because the room was now dead silent.

Izuku didn't seem to care. He was staring at Shoto in fear, like he would be mad at him or something. He could never see himself being truly angry with Izuku, but he understood why he might think he would be.

"I'm so sorry," Izuku whispered, almost inaudible.

"Why would you say that about the number one hero?" Sero asked apprehensively. "He's saved so many people."

"Because he's the worst," Shoto answered for him, partially against his will. "He's a complete fraud of a hero."

What had Izuku said a few days ago? Something about how the quirk could be overloaded when too much information was being processed at once? Yeah, that was probably happening with everyone, because no one said a word. Every quirk had a weakness, after all. Too bad it was such a stupid weakness, and not something to, you know, *stop it altogether*.

"Why is he a fraud?" Uraraka asked eventually, sounding terrified by the sound of her own voice.

Shoto felt his fists clench at his sides. He couldn't *say*-

“He’s abusive. He hurt my whole family, including me. He’s the reason my brother’s dead and my mother is in a mental hospital.” He felt Izuku put a hand on his, and Shoto forced himself to unclench his own and take it. He hoped he hadn’t accidentally drawn blood with his nails.

“I’m so sorry,” Izuku whispered again. “I didn’t mean to . . .”

“I don’t blame you,” he said, because “it’s okay” would have been a lie. He didn’t look at anyone’s faces as he spoke - that would’ve been way too much to handle. Not that this wasn’t already far too much. “I think I’m with Bakugou on this whole quirk thing. It’s the worst.”

He let go of his boyfriend’s hand and stood, head still down. “I don’t feel comfortable talking about this right now. I’m going to my room. Izuku, you can come if you want.”

He wasn’t even two steps away when he felt a hand on his own once more. “Of course I’m coming. Goodnight, everyone.”

Shoto almost laughed at everyone’s still gobsmacked expressions as they entered the elevator.

Almost.

They were in Shoto’s room when he finally broke.

“I’m so, so sorry,” Izuku said as he sat next to him on the bed. “I

didn't think, I didn't even *realize* what I had said-"

"To be fair," Shoto said, throat tight, "I would've said the same thing. He can go die."

Izuku gave an almost-laugh, and it was breathy and shaky and made his shoulders tremble like an earthquake. "Yeah, I guess you're right."

Shoto tried to ignore the tears in the other boy's eyes, but he couldn't. And for some reason, that was the straw that broke his back.

Great, crying. He *loved* crying.

He hiccuped lightly, making Izuku's gaze snap to him and eyes widen almost comically. "And now I've made you *cry*-"

"It's not you're fault," Shoto said around the lump in his throat, grasping Izuku's hand like a lifeline, even though he couldn't see him past the tears in his eyes. "It's not like they wouldn't have found out. It's literally the second week of this stupid thing. I'm surprised it didn't happen already."

"Are you gonna tell them anything?" Izuku asked before he immediately winced. "That was blunt - I *hate* this - but I have to ask . . . Are you just gonna leave it at what you said or . . ."

Shoto sighed shakily. "I don't know. You shared a lot with everyone already, right?"

Despite his tears, Izuku smiled a bit, though it looked more like a grimace. “I guess, yeah. They know the basics, just like they do with you now. But I probably know a lot more about you than you know about me.”

“At this point we should all just do a Q&A,” Shoto said, only half-joking. “We’ll all just sit in a classroom and ask each other about our inner demons like a discussion about quirk laws.”

Izuku laughed weakly, letting his head fall onto Shoto’s chest like he would be safe from their problems there. “That would save us some time, that’s for sure.”

And then, for some *god forsaken reason*, Shoto latched his arms around Izuku and began to sob.

“They know,” he found himself saying, vision blurry. “They know, they know, *they know*-“

“They do,” Izuku said. He sounded like he was crying too, and his arms were suddenly wrapped tightly around him as well. “And I’m so *sorry*. They won’t judge you, though. Promise. They accepted me and my past, so they’ll do the same for you.”

“I suppose,” Shoto said, suppressing a hiccup. “But what if they tell Aizawa, or it somehow gets back to my father?”

He felt Izuku freeze below him. “That would be very, very not good, that’s for sure. The part about your father, not Aizawa.”

“Why on e*arth* would I want Aizawa to know?” He didn’t mean to

sound harsh, but the panic in his chest was crawling up his throat and threatening to drown him. Like he was being water boarded by his fears.

"Kirishima went to Aizawa, and that turned out fine. And if you don't want this to get back to your father, you should tell everyone that."

"It's not like they can post it on social media right now," he said with a halfhearted shrug. "Or go off campus. There's no reason to bring it up."

"But this quirk won't last forever." Izuku's words hit him right in the gut. "They'll eventually be able to talk to their families again. They tell one wrong person and all hell could break lose."

"Yeah, okay, but if I bring it up they'll ask *questions*." He almost flinched at the thought. "That would be . . . not ideal."

"Maybe you could just put a note on the fridge. *Please refrain from ever speaking of Endeavor again. Signed, Shoto Todoroki.*"

Shoto couldn't help but laugh through his tears. "That could work."

Izuku was a bit freaked out when Shoto started crying.

Don't get him wrong, he was one hundred percent ready to support him and all he had gone through, but Shoto didn't usually *do* feelings. At least, to the degree of sobbing and shaking in someone else's lap

kind of feelings.

That's when it hit him - this quirk wasn't just altering their words.

It was altering their *emotions*.

It made so much *sense*. With everything that had happened - Izuku sharing his entire life story with the class, Bakugou finally apologizing, Kirishima breaking down, and now *this* - it was so obvious, now that he had figured it out.

It had to have had something to do with "true" emotions, or what they would feel if they couldn't to lie to themselves about how they were feeling. You could still lie to yourself in your head . . . but your emotions would still be all over the place. That would also explain why both Bakugou and Shoto confessed their feelings so quickly on that first day.

Shoto looked up at him. "I can hear the gears turning in your head. What are you thinking?"

Izuku explained to him his new revelation. He watched Shoto's eyes widen before he put his head in his hands. Izuku had probably just blown his mind.

"Yes, you are blowing my mind." He looked at him, bewildered. "How do you *do* that?"

Izuku shrugged, unsure of what to say. There were more important things to focus on now. "Practice? I don't think it matters. What matters is that we need to tell everyone else about this."

He thought the dual-haired boy would readily agree, but an uncertain expression crossed his face instead. “Should we though?” he asked. “You know . . . Tell them?”

Izuku stared. “Why wouldn’t we?”

Shoto rubbed the back of his neck. He looked down at the ground, deep in thought, for a long time.

“It wouldn’t change anything,” he finally said. “It would just cause more panic. Aren’t we all scared enough without this whole emotions thing thrown in?”

“I guess,” Izuku found himself saying. He could see where he was coming from - this wasn’t something they could take lightly. Any new information about this quirk would certainly upset the rest of the class, but . . . “Maybe we should tell Aizawa and see what he says. And we don’t even know if we’re right. We could all just be hormonal teenagers.”

“Telling Aizawa seems like a good idea. But really? You think I would be like this if a quirk had nothing to do with it?”

He wiped the tears off his face and flicked them at Izuku to prove his point, to which the green haired boy just snickered. “Good point. I, however, seemed completely normal, which is why it took me so long to figure it out.”

“Ain’t that the truth.”

”*Hey*-“

Shoto found himself next to Izuku when they told Aizawa the next day after class, and Aizawa agreed with Shoto - they shouldn’t tell the rest of the class, if only because it was just a hunch and not based on any actual proof. If it ended up coming out - which, it probably would, given their situation - it couldn’t be helped, but he told them to try and avoid it if possible. It would only cause more unnecessary grief, since there was pretty much nothing they could do about it.

And even if that was the case, Shoto desperately wished it wasn’t.

Because ever since he came down for breakfast that morning, everyone had been treating him like glass, and it was making him feel like a bug under a microscope. Actually no, not glass - more like a loose cannon. One that could go off at any moment. And he could tell they weren’t sure if they wanted it to go off or not. He would like nothing more than to tell them about this whole emotions thing and let them forget all about him.

Izuku had been eyeing him during their conversation with Aizawa, almost as if he were trying to get him to say something else. Which Izuku would never do, oh no. Never. He definitely wouldn’t try and goad him into spilling his tragic backstory to their teacher.

That was also one thing he desperately missed - sarcasm.

He really would’ve liked to be *so* sarcastic answering all his classmates questions about his past. It was a good way to deflect. To not let them know he actually cared about what he was saying, even if he was still very bad at actually being sarcastic. Social interactions were still a bit of a challenge, of course, and he had only ever been sarcastic to his

father for most of his life. It might've made things worse sometimes, but getting that tiny bit of control back was worth it to him.

But yeah, he still didn't understand other social norms - which was why, that night at dinner, he was fully unprepared for the storm his classmates were about to bring. Izuku wasn't kidding about the whole "honest emotions" thing, that was for sure.

"Why is your mom in a mental hospital?" Uraraka asked unceremoniously from across the table, before her hands flew to her mouth.

Izuku quickly stood up. "Hey, what if we didn't-"

"I'm so, so sorry!" she yelled, also standing up and bowing slightly at him. "I've been trying so hard not ask, and now I have, and now I'm just *ruining* all of this-"

"You're okay," Shoto said, trying to ease the tension. "You can both sit down."

They did, if rather slowly. All chatter had stopped at this point in favor of staring at the mess unfolding at the middle of the table.

"Do you . . . do you still want to know?" he asked quietly. "You all already know a lot."

Was this how Izuku had felt the other night? If the hand suddenly gripping his own was anything to go by, then yes. It also meant there was really no point in fighting this any longer, especially when he would just be delaying the inevitable.

“I mean-“ Uraraka had a bright red face- “You don’t have to tell us anything-“

“She poured boiling water on my face.” There. He said it. “She was having a mental breakdown because of my father’s abuse. She hated my left side because it looked so much like him.”

Nobody said a word, and for a moment, all he could hear was the blood rushing to his ears and blood pumping through his veins. That was, of course, before all hell broke loose.

Questions assaulted him from all directions, making it impossible to distinguish who was saying what or what they were even saying. It was too much, too many words, not enough *quiet*. He almost lifted his hands to cover his ears to just make it all *stop*.

“Everyone shut up!” Bakugou suddenly yelled, slamming his hands on the table and forcing everyone to look at him instead. “Leave Icy Hot alone!”

“Kacchan’s right,” Izuku said quietly. Eyes shifted to the boy who was now staring sadly at the table, head down so that his hair covered his eyes. “It’s my fault you guys even know all this. Don’t make it any worse.”

“It would’ve come out eventually,” Shoto managed to say, squeezing his hand and doing his best to reassure him. “Don’t blame yourself. And I was the one that asked her if she really wanted to know, after all."

“So that’s how you got your scar,” Yaomomo said, gripping Jiro’s

hand so hard her knuckles were white. The other's hand wasn't much better, whose face also looked strangely blank.

"Yeah." His throat was almost closing in on itself, which was weird because he knew he wasn't allergic to anything. Maybe he was allergic to emotions and this quirk would kill him, which honestly wasn't a horrible alternative. "I didn't see her for years after that. My father really only put her in the hospital because she scarred me."

He didn't say the words "hurt me" because Endeavor had done that every single day of his life.

"Why is he still a pro hero?" Shinsou's voice was dark and had a certain edge to it. "Why is he not in prison?"

"Money, mostly." Shoto found himself internally chuckling at the sheer ridiculousness of society. Criminals always thrived at the top, after all. "He had a lot of it to throw at all his problems. Including how he never bested All Might. It's the reason I'm even here."

He hadn't even realized he had said that before he looked back up and saw all of his classmates staring at him in abject horror.

"What do you mean, the reason you're here?" someone choked out.

Shoto sighed. This was going to take a while. Could he knock himself out with his own ice?

"I guess I should start at the beginning . . . Do any of you know what quirk marriages are?"

“Isn’t it like dog breeding?” Tsu said bluntly. “But like, with people and powers?”

“*Tsu*!” Iida scolded.

“Why would - *oh*,” she said, face turning bright red. “I’m sorry, ribbit.”

“It’s okay,” Shoto found himself saying. It really was the same, concept wise, so he ignored the weird feeling that shot through his chest at the thought. “You’re not wrong. Most people view it as unethical nowadays, but for the number two hero, buying a woman with an ice quirk wouldn’t be too much of a problem as long as it was kept under wraps. All he had left to do after that was have a powerful child and train it to become the next number one from the age of five.”

He let his statement - which he had had pretty much no control over, with the words spilling out of his mouth like vomit - sink in. He couldn’t imagine what was going through everyone’s heads, but then again, he didn’t have to: everyone was shouting over each other once again.

Shoto forcefully remained silent as they all unwillingly shared their opinions on how horrible and appalling and monstrous that was, like he wasn’t painfully aware of that already. He hated thinking about it for too long, because then he started to hate himself on a very unhealthy level.

He wasn’t sure what made everyone finally calm down. Maybe they just got all the anger out of their systems, or perhaps they simply realized he wasn’t going to try and talk over them. Maybe the quirk

just wore off for the time being, since they probably would have stayed silent in the first place if they weren't under the influence of it. He still saw very hateful and somber expressions on most of their faces. They were probably unsatisfied with his lack of explanation, and he suddenly felt guilty.

"I'm sorry for being so unhelpful with my words," he said somewhat awkwardly, trying his best to be sincere. "I'm trying to not think of it as much as I can while talking about it, but if you all really want to know-"

"That's not why we're upset," Iida said, voice full of anger, and maybe even tears. "We're angry at the man who hurt you and your family. And we won't ask any more of you."

"I'm so *sorry*," Yaomomo suddenly said. "I was *there*, I could've seen something, *done* something-"

"What are you talking about?" Shoto asked, absolutely bewildered by his friend's unprompted words.

"Your father hosted some sort of dinner for pro heroes and other high-status people, and my - *my* family was there. I didn't realize anything was going on - I even *saw* you, just sitting at the table like nothing was wrong-"

She broke down then, turning her head and burying it in Jiro's shoulder, whose face was still decidedly blank yet now as white as a sheet. Shoto felt his heart ache at the sight of the strongest girl in class - and his oldest friend - falling apart at the seems.

"It's not your fault." Shoto reached across the table and grabbed her hand, shocking even himself at the show of affection. He barely

registered the single fresh tear track on his own cheek as he stared at the table. He really only noticed when he saw it land in a perfect little droplet on the wood. “We were both so young, and none of the adults saw anything either. By that point I knew how to hide everything pretty well.”

She squeezed his hand so hard he felt the circulation begin to cut off, but he didn’t mind. “I’m still so sorry,” she choked out, face still hidden. “You say he trained you - he, he even showed us the training room, and I didn’t even realize there was *blood* on the floor-“

Shoto felt his heart skip a beat at that, but he made sure his face stayed impassive as he tried to reassure her. “Yeah, that was probably mine.”

Or not.

This truth quirk was a real kick in the gut sometimes.

He felt his stomach lurch when she flinched at his monotonous words, as did many other’s at the table. Maybe a neutral take on this subject wasn’t the best idea if they were going to react in such a way.

“I know you already know this,” Izuku said from next to him, tightening his hold on the hand not occupying Yaomomo’s, “but I really, *really* hate your father.”

“I’m aware,” Shoto said. “But it’s not like he ever . . . did it viciously. Or out of hatred. He was just incredibly harsh in his training.”

“That doesn’t mean shit,” Bakugou said, and all eyes turned to the boy

that was practically seething at the mouth. “When an adult hurts you, it’s not okay. No matter their fucking *motivation* or whatever.”

Shoto tilted his head slightly in surprise. That wasn’t something he would expect from Bakugou of all people. “You’re right. I’m simply trying to let go of the anger that’s been weighing me down for so long.”

“Why anyone would want to “let go” of anger, I’ll never know.”

Shoto’s lips quirked upwards at that, because really, it was such a *Bakugou* thing to say that it made him feel almost normal - even if it was only for just a moment. “I don’t know. Maybe I never will. But at least he never beat me outside the training room.”

Yep. He hated this quirk.

And maybe those words were the last straw, or maybe they were simply horrible enough on their own, but several of his friends and even people he hardly knew teared up or visibly started crying once he said them, if they weren’t already. Izuku embraced him from the side, and suddenly people were standing up to join in - Uraraka, Iida, Yaomomo, Tsu, Kirishima, and he didn’t even know who else because he couldn’t see past the tears gathering in his own eyes.

“Maybe we should just start the movie night,” he said eventually through the lump in his throat. He tried to ignore all the thoughts and feelings swirling throughout his entire being, much more in favor of a simple distraction. Anything to keep his mouth shut and his classmates from becoming more upset.

“Yeah,” Mina said with a slight snivel somewhere to his left, and did that mean she was part of this weird hug pile too? “I can go set it up.

But we are *not* letting you go.”

And true to her word, the set up of the movie night was drastically different from the previous ones. Shoto found himself dead center with Uraraka and Izuku at his sides, Yaomomo, Tsu, and Mina in front of his legs, and, somehow, everyone piled onto that same couch. Someone was above him on the top of everything, and he was pretty sure it was Tokoyami based on the feather that fell in his lap.

Izuku was curled into his side, like he wanted Shoto to hold him and never let go. He happily obliged, putting an arm around him and letting Izuku rest his head on his chest.

“Love you,” the greenette whispered next to his heart, making him melt. His boyfriend was certainly a badass on the field, but damn if he wasn’t adorable like this.

“Love you too,” he whispered right back.

He hardly paid attention to the movie, too content in soaking in the warmth of everyone around him. When was the last time he had received this much affection? He wasn’t entirely sure he ever had it at all. And man, was it wonderful. Izuku was a great hugger, but there was just something different about having all his close friends near him.

“You’re mumbling,” Izuku mumbled into his chest. “That’s usually my thing.”

Shoto found himself smiling softly. “I’m just thinking about how much I appreciate all of this, I guess.”

He said it a bit louder so that Izuku could hear him better, but he guessed he was just a bad whisperer. Several people turned and gushed about how amazing he was and how much they loved him.

“Thanks guys,” he said, fighting against the growing blush on his cheeks. “I just don’t . . . I’m not used to this kind of affection.”

Someone paused the movie, indicating that once again the attention was back on him. And damn it, this movie night was supposed to be a distraction so that he didn’t further upset his friends.

“Hey Todoroki?” Kirishima whispered. Shoto looked over to see him lower the remote, meaning he had been the one to pause the action sequence they were now looking at. “Can I ask you something? About what you said earlier.”

Shoto felt a heavy weight settle in his chest, but nonetheless nodded. “Sure.”

“You said Endeavor was responsible for your brother’s death. Do you . . . Did you ever do anything like this with him? Or other siblings if you had them? I just hate the idea of you being alone like you’re implying.”

And wow, was Shoto not ready for the roller coaster of emotions that question took him on.

Once his head stopped spinning - which couldn’t have been longer than a few seconds, since no one looked overly concerned - he took a deep breath and answered. “No. I never really spent time with any of my siblings.”

“Was there an age gap?” Tsu aksed sadly, and Shoto was once again reminded of her very large family that she had taken care of for so long. “Did you not get along?”

He almost smiled at the irony of her question. “I don’t know how we would’ve gotten on. I wasn’t allowed to see them.”

“Why not?” Uraraka asked angrily. “Was isolation Endeavor’s idea of good hero making material?”

He shrugged. He didn’t bother saying that was exactly what Endeavor thought, since she seemed to realize it a second after she said that. He held up a hand to keep her from apologizing. “It’s fine. And they weren’t allowed to see me because I was his "masterpiece" and I lived in a "different world" than them.”

“But how did your brother die?” Kaminari asked before turning red. “I mean, er- oh crap-“

“His quirk killed him,” Shoto said in lieu of delaying the inevitable. He watched as several people blanched back in shock at his bluntness, even with the truth quirk. Or it might've just been how horrible the statement itself was. “My father tried several times before me to create a perfect mix of ice and fire. My brother got my father’s flames and my mother’s heat tolerance. It was a deadly combination.”

He felt something in his chest begin to shake, but he did his best to ignore it. He hardly even knew Touya, so what right did he have to grieve?

“I’m sorry,” Iida said, and Shoto turned to look and felt his heart twinge at the sight of tears on his face. “Losing a brother . . . I know how painful that must have been.”

“I barely knew him.” Shoto thought the words would bring comfort to him, but they did just the opposite. He just began to shake harder, and Izuku and Uraraka both gripped his hands tightly. “I never even got to know him. I don’t even-“ he was horrified when a sob started to build up in his throat- “I don’t even know how it happened. No one ever told me. I just found out at the dinner table and was expected to show up for evening training like usual.”

He couldn’t take it anymore - tears escaped his eyes like his boyfriend’s did on any other day. Izuku had to have been right about the emotions thing - he had never let himself feel this way before about what had happened. He had always pushed it to the back of his mind, ignored it because there were more important things to focus on. But now he was being forced to accept the reality that he never knew his siblings or had any sort of normal childhood.

“Am I broken?” he heard himself whisper.

“Probably.” Izuku was always one for waterworks, and he definitely wasn’t shying away from that now. His words surprised Shoto, although they probably shouldn’t have. He was under this damn truth quirk, after all. “But we all are.”

And that was it, wasn’t it? They were all just broken pieces of their upbringings shoved together into some semblance of a functioning human being. And wasn’t that how everybody existed, if you really thought about it? Nobody was whole. Nobody was untouched by the hands of grief. Some people were just better at hiding it than others.

And usually he was better at it than this, but give him a break. He was emotionally screwed over by the actions of a toddler at the moment. Sue him.

Which is probably why he asked his next question, something he never would say under threat of death normally. “Am I worth it to you guys? Or . . . to you, Izuku?”

“Of course you are,” his boyfriend said without a hint of hesitation. Small murmurs of agreement could be heard, like they knew they were intruding on a moment - but for now he just had eyes on the boy in his arms. “You always have been, just like you said I was. Why else would I literally shatter myself?”

Shoto felt himself nod distantly as silent tears continued to roll down his face. “That’s a - a fair point.”

“Why is Endeavor still a hero?” Uraraka suddenly asked. “Like, I know you said money was an issue, but like if all of your siblings told the authorities wouldn’t at least *something* happen?”

“Yeah, Shoto would be discredited as a hero before his career even began,” Izuku said, before nonchalantly adding, “That’s why we’re playing the long game.”

Everyone seemed to freeze at his words, and the cool edge they held. It was unsettling to hear it in Izuku’s voice, but Shoto had to admit it sounded kind of hot.

(He was not blushing. Definitely not.)

“The . . . long . . . game?” someone asked, and oh man, was that a mistake based on the the evil glint in Izuku’s eyes.

“Yes, the long game that will put Endeavor in jail for life once Shoto is

a pro hero with credibility and we both have pull over the Hero Commission. I don't want to move, so I'm not getting the binders from my room, but I have it all memorized anyway. Ask away."

Shoto smiled as Izuku answered everyone's questions about how he would be taking down Endeavor, like he couldn't use a paper clip against him and win if he had enough planning time. He loved the green haired, slightly-crazy dork he now called a boyfriend, and he wouldn't have it any other way.

Getting rid of Endeavor was just a bonus.

Chapter End Notes

tw: Endeavor, child abuse, minor character death, domestic abuse

points at tododeku they're in love, your honor

1-A: *is absolutely devastated and furious at endeavor*
Shoto: oh they're mad at me, aren't they, this is all my fault-

So the whole emotions thing is going on :) I hope y'all like that twist lol. I was just thinking to myself "how do I make this MORE dramatic" and this was the answer. If you are thinking it will come back into play later you would be very right

People often write Shoto as this very proper and polite, straight to the point boy but like this guy is aggressively casual and hilarious. Like they make him unable to be sarcastic but tell me Shoto "that's a nasty scar you've got there" Todoroki isn't the most savage person in class 1a thank you for coming to my ted talk

Also, for writing one of my top favorite characters, this was surprisingly hard. Maybe it's because I've just read so many "Endeavor was a piece of shit all along" fics and it's just desensitized me lol. If this was bad just blame it on that :)

Also if you came here to see minor characters get screen time I'm doing my best but this is like purely for my own serotonin levels which are sorely lacking, so my favs it is, sorry

Little Monster

Chapter Notes

tw in end notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Perhaps it was just as well that Todoroki's horrific past had come to light earlier that week, as it might possibly soften the blow of what was to come.

Of course, Hitoshi didn't think he would experience the absolute emotional backlash of finding out the number two turned number one hero was an abusive piece of shit ever again. But maybe for everyone else his history would be a close second.

Hitoshi wasn't worried about accidentally saying anything - he had been keeping his mouth shut since he was five years old, literally and figuratively, and therefore had a lot of practice. But of course that ended up not mattering, because everything always went wrong somehow with him. He should've been used to it at this point.

It was during a training exercise when he first fucked up. He wasn't sure why, he was normally completely fine shoving his emotions down to the point where he was almost a husk of a person. Which he was totally fine with, of course he was. He had had a lot of practice with that, too.

They hadn't worn their hero costumes in few weeks, so it had been a while since he had worn his voice changer. Which shouldn't have been an issue - he had never had a problem wearing it before, except for maybe the first time. He always ignored the panic in his chest until it faded away - it was usually fine once his focus shifted to the current goal of the exercise rather than old, suppressed memories.

So why was he hyperventilating?

“You good, man?” Kirishima asked, who was one of his teammates. At least, he thought he was one of his teammates. He couldn’t think of anything other than the current lack of oxygen in his lungs.

Despite this, he did his best to suppress his feelings and brush off the other’s concern. “I’m having a panic attack.”

Or not.

This quirk would be the death of him.

He was pretty sure the redhead immediately went on high alert, which was *exactly* the response Hitoshi had been going for. Perfect.

“Dude, do you need me to get Mr. Aizawa?” His voice was full of panic, like that would help Hitoshi during his current *panic* attack. He could hardly blame him though, as Kirishima had recently spewed his own anxiety demons to the class. Hitoshi could understand.

“Yeah,” he said against his will, or nearly said. It probably came out as more of a wheeze. He couldn’t tell, because his heartbeat was louder than his brain and he felt like something was tightening over his rib cage.

This was definitely not how he had wanted this day to go.

He was suddenly a child again, and the thing on his face was heavier

in a split second. He wanted it off. He needed it *off*. He started to claw at his face, trying to rid himself of this stupid contraption, like he hadn't already tried countless times to no avail. He just needed it off and he didn't care how hurt he got.

He felt moisture hit the fingers scraping at his cheeks. Was he crying? He didn't think so. He wasn't sure.

Strong hands suddenly gripped at his own, causing him to freeze. He stopped clawing at his face, if only because he couldn't anymore. But maybe this person could help him, even if they really only wanted to hurt him-

"Get it off," he choked out. "Get it *off*-"

"It is off," a deep, soft voice said. "I need you to breathe with me, Shinso."

"I - I *can't*- " he was going to die from being crushed by whatever was around his chest, and the object on his face, not *suffocation* of all things- "*Get it off*-"

"It's not there anymore," the man said once more, bringing Hitoshi's hands down to their chest, which was rising and falling evenly. "Copy my breathing. Can you do that for me?"

And maybe something about his voice calmed him down, and he found himself able to think a little more clearly.

He found it extremely difficult, and completely exhausting, but he did his best to match his inhales and exhales with him.

And he realized the man was Aizawa, and that he was lying against a wall in Ground Beta, breathing hard. His voice changer - *voice changer* - was in his hands, and he realized that there was blood underneath his fingernails.

“Are you alright?” Aizawa asked, slowly taking the device from him and setting it to the side.

Yes, I’m perfectly fine.

“I don’t know. I’m still a bit shaky and out of breath.” He was going to find that child. He was going to find that child with that stupid quirk of his and tear him a new one.

“That’s okay,” his teacher said, putting a hand on his shoulder. “Why don’t you go see Recovery Girl? Kaminari, go with him.”

This was the point where Hitoshi realized they were definitely not alone, and all of his teammates from the exercise were close enough to him that it was clear they were obviously worried, but far enough away that it was clear they were uncomfortable.

Kaminari looked like a deer caught in headlights. “Uh, sir-“

“Are you able to take him or not?”

“Of course I am, I just don’t know if I’m the most qualified?”

Aizawa muttered something under his breath - something to do with "idiot problem children" - and rolled his eyes. "You have working legs and you know where to go. That's qualified enough for me. I can't go because I'm the only one supervising this class right now, so I need to know I can trust you."

The blond looked at their teacher a moment longer before shrugging his shoulders with a grin. "Sure thing! Let's go, amigo!"

He offered his hand to Hitoshi, who couldn't help but simply stare at it for a moment, uncomprehending. When he eventually took it, Kaminari lifted him to his feet, surprisingly not too fast, and slung an arm around his shoulder.

He found it strangely endearing and a bit more comfortable than he would've liked to admit.

It was when they were out of earshot that Hitoshi found himself speaking again, voice slightly rough. "You don't have to do this. I know where to go."

"Aizawa's orders, man," Kaminari said with a chuckle. "Don't wanna get on his bad side."

"He's not that bad," Hitoshi said. "He kind of took me under his wing after the sports festival and helped me be able to get into the hero course. He's actually the closest thing I have to a father figure."

He felt his face heat up instantly at his admission, and wasn't surprised to see Kaminari's jaw drop. Aizawa wasn't exactly uncaring - he cared very deeply about each of his students, to the point where he regularly risked his life for them - but he wasn't usually the most . . . affectionate type.

Hitoshi, of course, knew the truth: Aizawa loved them all like his own children and would probably adopt every single one of them at a moments notice if the need arose.

(And maybe the need was already there for Hitoshi, but he didn't want to cause any more trouble for the man that had already helped him so much.)

"Wow, I didn't realize you guys were so close," Kaminari said. "Does your dad suck or something?"

Hitoshi felt his heart skip a beat. He forcefully bit his tongue to keep himself from impulsively answering, then spoke very carefully. "I'm actually in foster care. It's nice being in the dorms, since I'm so used to sharing my space."

That was a good deflecting statement, right? Well, it turned out to be, since Kaminari took it and ran with it, talking about how great the dorms were and how close everyone had gotten. Hitoshi discreetly let a out a breath he was holding, and then had to hold back a blush when Kaminari told him how happy he was that he was there with them and not "that weird little purple creep."

"I'm glad I've gotten to know you, dude," he said with a smile, before shaking his head at himself. "This truth thing is really making me sappy, I guess."

"I don't mind. I actually kind of like it," Hitoshi answered automatically - and now he needed to deflect, fast, before the blond saw his red face. "Can I ask you a question?"

“Shoot.”

“Why did you say you weren’t qualified to take me to the nurse?”

Kaminari almost looked startled for a second, and maybe even a bit scared, but it must have been Hitoshi’s imagination since he was grinning and sheepishly rubbing the back of his neck not a moment later. “Well, I’m the most likely to get distracted by a bird flying by and lose you. Or just wander off the path in general.”

Hitoshi couldn’t help but laugh. “I guess that’s true,” he said, before adding a jab of his own: “You’ve done a good job so far, let’s just hope no puppies wander on campus.”

Kaminari looked incredibly offended. “I don’t care what the circumstances are - the League could be attacking, for all I care - okay, *maybe* I’d care a bit then - but never not wish for puppies!”

“Fine. If puppies show up, I give you permission to be one hundred percent distracted.”

“That’s all I ask of you.”

Izuku was pretty concerned when the training ended and he found out that Shinso had had a panic attack. He was one of his best friends, of course he was going to be worried - he was even more so when Aizawa informed them that Shinso was now with Recovery Girl.

“Is he ok?” he had asked frantically, before their teacher assured them that he was fine and that he had simply scratched himself pretty badly in the face during his attack. Which was a bit weird, if Izuku was being honest - but nonetheless felt relieved that his friend wasn’t seriously hurt.

Still, he asked Kirishima if Shinso was okay as soon as they got to the locker rooms, knowing that they had been in a group together. He said that physically, yes, he was alright - but apparently he had been really worried when Shinso had seemed to completely disappear into his mind.

“I’ve never seen him like that, man,” he said with a low voice, sitting on the bench and making no move to change out of his sweaty clothes. “I never would have thought . . . And it seemed to come out of nowhere, too. Did I-“ He suddenly looked terrified. “Did *I* do something?”

“I’m sure you didn’t do anything,” Izuku said immediately. “Panic attacks can be caused by any number of things, and I know he trusts you.”

Kirishima hummed. “I guess.”

“Don’t go blaming yourself,” Katsuki said with a frown before setting a few sparks off his palms. “And don’t make me force you to love yourself, either!”

Kirishima sweat dropped and gave an awkward grin. “Sure thing, bro.”

“We were kissing twenty minutes ago. Do *not* call me bro.”

Denki wasn't stupid.

Well, he kind of was, but that wasn't the point. The point was that he could tell something was bothering his friend (crush?) besides the obvious. His heart ached for Shinso and how his face was pretty much covered in blood, but he forced himself to not stare and instead act like everything was normal.

Recovery Girl was able to heal Shinso, leaving him extremely tired, to the point where he was almost fully leaning on Denki. He suspected this was the real reason Aizawa had wanted him to take him here, alongside the obvious. He let Shinso lean on him all the way to the dorms, and tried not to feel too giddy about it. He was simply helping his friend. That was all.

Totally.

When they got there, everyone seemed to be hanging out in the common room waiting for them. "Hey guys," Denki said as he entered and helped Shinso kick off his shoes.

"Is he okay?" Kirishima came up and asked immediately. He looked so distraught, and Denki remembered how scared he had looked earlier when Shinso had pretty much collapsed to the ground without warning.

(Of course, Denki had also been terrified when he vaguely heard the words "panic attack" followed by the sound of a body falling to the floor.)

“Other than being about to fall asleep as soon as he hits his bed?” he asked. “He’s in ship shape. He’s probably so tired because he never sleeps normally. So the healing just sapped all his leftover energy.”

“Oh, good,” Midoriya said with a relieved sigh. “Why don’t we let him take a nap, and when he gets up we’ll start the movie night? We can even let him pick the movies.”

“Sounds good to me,” Shinso slurred from Denki’s shoulder, making everyone sweat drop and laugh awkwardly.

“Goodnight, Shinso,” Midoriya said, smiling sadly as Denki helped the other into the elevator. He knew why he looked so upset - it was weird seeing Shinso be this vulnerable, and it was because of something he couldn’t control. He knew they all desperately wanted to help him, but they just didn’t know how.

Maybe they would find out soon, since this truth quirk was so great at forcing them to spill their guts. Denki really hoped it didn’t come to that, though. As much as he wanted to help his friend, he didn’t want him to share his troubles before he was ready.

(He knew all about troubles. Hopefully nothing would be forced from his own trove of secrets, but he was good at pretending to be happy anyway. So nothing to worry about there.)

He tucked him into bed, and as he was doing so Shinso grabbed his wrist. “Thank you,” he muttered sleepily, before rolling over and starting to snore.

Denki very pointedly ignored the blush on his own cheeks as he left

the room.

They all hung out in the common room while they waited, mostly doing homework. Denki really wasn't a fan of this quirk, mainly because he could still say stuff he thought was true but actually wasn't. Like, he could say the freezing point of water was one hundred degrees if he actually thought that, meaning he could still get all the answers wrong on the worksheet.

Totally unfair.

(And he knew the bushes outside weren't poisonous now because of this fact. He blamed Sero, who had told him this when they first got to the dorms. He laughed quite hard when Denki was told the truth.)

Hitoshi woke with a groan.

Which was weird - at least the waking up part. He didn't remember going to sleep, and he hardly ever "woke up" at all - he was more in favor of staying up night after night and adding value to the designer bags under his eyes.

Then he remembered what had happened, and just groaned louder and shoved his face into his pillow.

He trudged down to the common room, still feeling tired but knowing he wouldn't be able to get back to sleep if he tried, and waved halfheartedly as the elevator doors opened.

“Shinso!” Midoriya said with a smile from the couch, instantly perking up at the sight of his friend. “How are you feeling? Did you sleep well? Do you need to go back to bed? Do you want to help us pick out some-“

“I’m fine,” he said before his friend could ask him any more questions. Hitoshi knew he meant well, but he could be a real chatterbox sometimes. He didn’t mind, of course - it was one of the qualities he admired about him - but he just couldn’t keep up with the speed of the other’s thoughts half the time.

“Any movie suggestions, purple boy?” Mina asked from the floor, where she was browsing though a giant tub of movies. Since they didn’t have wifi, and therefore no streaming services, the class had collectively begged Aizawa for movies once they ran out of the ones everyone had brought from home. And since UA’s budget was so big they ended up supplying them with more than they would need for an entire year.

“I don’t really know a lot of movies,” he said with a shrug. “Pick out whatever you think would be good.”

“Wait! Didn’t you say you didn’t watch a lot of Disney?” Kaminari asked, also digging through the bin.

“Yeah, I didn’t watch much of anything.”

“What about *Zootopia*?” he said brightly, pulling the disk out. It had a picture of a humanoid fox and a rabbit on it, which was . . . interesting, to say the least.

“Sure, why not?” Hitoshi said with another shrug. “I trust your judgement.”

Something sparkled in Kaminari's eyes. "Epic, man."

He ended up between the blond boy and Midoriya as they waited for the movie to start up. Thankfully no one was asking him any questions about what had happened earlier, because he wasn't sure he would be able to explain it if he tried. Well, that was sort of a lie - he knew *exactly* what had triggered the panic attack, but the issue was that it usually *wasn't* an issue.

He wouldn't be surprised if it had something to do with this bloody quirk.

The movie started, and he started to get the gist of it. Everyone was an animal but they could do everything humans could, including have prejudices and hate things that were different from them. He huffed quietly in his seat - some things would always be the same no matter where you went or what anthropomorphic creatures you observed.

He thought it was ironically funny, until it suddenly wasn't.

The fox in the movie was suddenly a little kid, and he was joining his local cub scouts or something. He raised his little paw on screen. "*I, Nicholas Wilde, promise to be brave, loyal, helpful, and trustworthy!"*

"Even though you're a fox?"

"*What?"*

Hitoshi watched as the kid was roughly pushed to the floor and held

down by the others.

“No, no! What did I do wrong, you guys?! No, please! Tell me! What did I do wrong?!”

His stomach plummeted to his feet when the stupid metal contraption from his nightmares was brought on screen, and when it was forcefully put on the boy he felt his lungs and heart completely stop working altogether.

“What did I do?! No!”

The rodent chuckled darkly. “*If you thought we would ever trust a fox without a muzzle, you're even dumber than you look.*”

The fox ran from the building, and Hitoshi was vaguely aware that he was now standing up and moving through the panicked haze he was now stuck in.

Next thing he knew he was on the floor, struggling to get air into his lungs and staring blankly at the elevator doors right in front of him. He could hear blood pounding in his ears and he felt like a snake was constricting his chest, but none of that mattered, because he knew the stupid thing was back on his face and he had to get it off.

He started to attempt to pry it off, but hands caught his wrists and held them down at his sides. He nearly whimpered, not knowing who was touching him or if they were going to hurt him. He was distantly aware of several bodies around his own, and that made his heart rate pick up, but he really only cared about whoever was holding his hands hostage and forcing him to stay in this hell.

One of his hands was suddenly brought up to his chest, right over his heart, which made him freeze. Then his other hand was brought over someone else's chest, where he could feel a steady heartbeat. Even though it was slightly faster than he somehow knew to be normal, it was dramatically slower and steadier than his own.

". . . so. Shinso!"

The noise was slowing filtering in.

"Shinso . . . to copy my breathing . . . that for me?"

He noticed the breathing of the other chest was very up and down, up and down, while his own was very sporadical and fast - which was weird, because it felt like his rib cage was closing in on itself and forcing his lungs to shut down.

Nevertheless, he tried to do what he was told, partially because he somehow knew he had to, and partially because another smaller, more childlike part of him knew that doing what he was told would make the pain go away quicker.

He forced himself to take even breathes, and got a weird sense of deja-vu when it started working and noise slammed back into him like a bullet train.

The movie must have still been playing, since he heard some weird music - no one must have turned it off on their way over, because every one of his classmates was now distantly surrounding him and pretty much dissolving into panic themselves. Some of them were muttering encouragement at him, others were muttering to themselves, and some were just standing with the most paralyzed expressions on their faces. If the circumstances were different, Hitoshi

might've even laughed.

He coughed roughly instead, as the greedy lungfuls of air he was now getting were a shock to his system. A hand was on his back now, rubbing soothing circles. He looked over and saw it was Kaminari, who smiled at him shakily.

"Hey, man," he whispered.

"Hey," Hitoshi said, sounding broken and like he had been eating glass, and feeling like it, too.

"Are you alright?" came a quiet voice from in front of him. He turned again to see Midoriya sitting there, still holding Hitoshi's hand to his chest like it was fragile and precious.

"Maybe?" he managed to choke out. "I don't know. Probably not."

Someone must have finally paused the TV, because the silence rang through the room.

"Let's scoot over a bit, yeah?" Midoriya said softly, helping Hitoshi slide back so he could lean against the back of the couch. He did so gratefully, exhausted from what had just happened.

"Here," Uraraka said, handing him a glass of water. He thanked her before downing the entire thing faster than he ever had before, including after intense workouts. It slightly concerned him.

“You thirsty?” Bakugou asked nonchalantly, making Hitoshi give a light snort. He was kneeled down next to him too, which would’ve normally surprised Hitoshi, but there had been so many surprises these past few weeks that it somehow just felt right that he was by his side, and he didn’t question it.

“Thank you,” he said again as he gave the glass back to the girl. “I’m . . . I’m sorry you guys had to see that.”

“It’s totally fine, Shinso,” Midoriya said. “Maybe . . .” He looked up at him nervously, like he was going to breach a sensitive subject. And, knowing him, he probably was. “Maybe you could tell us your triggers so you don’t have to go through that anymore. We could help you avoid them.”

And Hitoshi knew he meant well, of *course* he did - but that didn’t stop the raw fear that flashed though his heart at the question and the blood he almost drew from his lip from biting it so hard.

Maybe he could talk around the subject and speak very, *very* carefully?

“I don’t want you guys to be inconvenienced by me,” he said finally.

“You’re not an inconvenience,” Todoroki said, and Hitoshi realized that he was right next to him, too, between Midoriya and Kaminari. “If I’m not one with my garbage baggage, then you aren’t either.”

“*Shoto*!”

“What?”

He couldn't help but smile lightly at the couple's banter. Maybe . . . maybe Todoroki had a point. Every other person had been accepted for who they were in the past - even Bakugou, who had straight up bullied Midoriya for years. If they could forgive him, and support Kirishima, and Mina, and Tsu, and Yaomomo, and Midoriya, and Todoroki-

Maybe they could accept him, too.

He turned to the boy who was still absentmindedly rubbing his back.

"Remember what I told you on our walk?" he asked Kaminari with a sad smile.

"That you were in foster care?" he said instantly.

(Hitoshi knew the blond was smart, but not that smart. Screw everyone else for calling him dumb, when he could make connections that fast.)

He hummed his confirmation. "It's because my parents dumped me on the side of the road as soon as my quirk developed. I was homeless for days before a pro hero found me and sent me to the authorities. And somehow it just got even worse."

The words had slipped out of his mouth like butter, leaving him completely, one hundred percent mortified. He had only meant to say that his parents had given him up and that foster care was less than ideal. That . . . was *not* what he just implied.

“That’s horrible,” Kirishima said, clearly near tears. Hitoshi still found all this “caring about him” business very weird. “Your parents were quirkest jerks and you didn’t deserve any of that.”

“Yeah, don’t listen to a word they said,” Bakugou insisted, arms crossed and looking downright murderous. “Just ‘cause they gave birth to you doesn’t mean shit.”

“If only they were the only ones,” he answered before regret filled him once again. Many members of their class had expressed their disdain for this truth quirk, and he was truly starting to understand the full bodied loathing they all had.

“Anyone else that did anything to hurt you was *wrong*, Shinso,” Jirou said, kneeling down next to him and grasping his free hand tightly. “Even if they saw you as a villain for something you had no control - *wait*.” Her voice suddenly filled with horror and her eyes widened. She slowly turned to face him dead on, and somehow he knew she had figured it out. She was a smart one, just like Kaminari. “The movie. The scene. Your quirk. The voice changer . . .”

She trailed off, clearly horrified by what she had realized and not wanting to say it aloud. He wasn’t sure if anyone else understood yet.

So he decided to just go ahead and bite the bullet.

“The muzzle,” he finished.

He said it so silently you could’ve heard a pin drop over him, but he knew for a fact that every single one of them heard, if only because of the intense, death-like silence that followed. He felt someone suddenly put a hand on and tightly grip his arm, and wasn’t too shocked to realize it was Bakugou, who was looking at him with pained eyes

while biting his lip. He gave him a tiny, strained smile.

The blond didn't return it.

". . .Why didn't you tell me?" a new voice asked brokenly.

And no, he was not expecting to look up and see Aizawa standing in the doorway.

"How long have you been there?" he couldn't help but ask. He then noticed Iida, standing off to the side of the door, breathing hard and steam coming out of his engines. He must have ran and got their teacher when he started to have his panic attack, because he was "responsible" and all that other annoying crap.

"Long enough," Aizawa said as he started to walk over. "You said your foster homes weren't that bad, and that you were fine in the system." He knelt down in front of him, right between Midoriya and Bakugou, and Hitoshi could see the pain in his eyes as he muttered, almost as a joke, "God, I don't know why I believed you."

"I'm pretty convincing," he said, half jokingly, half serious.

Aizawa smiled sadly at him. "I told you I could've gotten you out. Why did you say no?"

"A lot of reasons, I guess," he whispered, not noticing how he was physically closing in on himself. "I was gonna be living in the dorms anyway. And it's horrible, you know? I was this . . . this little *monster*, who wasn't allowed to speak. *Ever*. If I did it was shoved on my face for days. And if I even *tried* to speak while it was on . . ." He

bit his tongue to keep himself from scaring his classmates. “It wasn’t pretty.”

“I’m so sorry,” Aizawa said as he put a hand on his shoulder.

Hitoshi didn’t even *care* anymore as he started to pull at his own hair. Words slipped out brokenly and unintentionally and maybe even somewhat intentionally, almost like he had been wanting to say them for so, *so* long but just didn’t have the courage or strength to.

“And I didn’t want to *burden* you, since you had already done so much for me, and I didn’t want to pile fixing my garbage life onto the list, even if you’re the closest thing I’ve got to a dad-”

Aizawa then did something totally unexpected, and yet somehow completely expected at the same time.

He hugged him.

“And you’ve become like a son to me,” he whispered, quiet enough that no one else would hear.

He wasn’t crying, he *wasn’t.* And he definitely didn’t suppress a sob as he hugged his mentor - *father figure?* - back.

“Do you want to come to my place?” Aizawa asked, just as quiet as before. “We can deal with . . . everything in the morning.”

“Yeah,” he said through the lump in his throat. “But can we . . . Can

we finish the movie first?”

He said that part loudly enough for everyone else to hear, and hopefully it did the trick and lightened the mood. Plus . . . he wanted to see someone who was seen as a villain, and went through what he went through, get a happy ending. Even if it was just a silly cartoon.

“Of course, Purple Boy,” Mina choked out, with a very forced laugh to go with it. “You heard him. Movie and cuddles time, pronto. We love you - we love you *so much*, don’t you ever forget it.”

Tearful and enthusiastic words of agreement filtered into his ears. He just cried harder, burying his head in Aizawa’s neck and gripping his shirt tightly to hide just how much he was shaking.

And soon enough, movies and cuddles time it was, with Aizawa’s arm over his shoulders and Midoriya on his other side, with Kaminari, Kirishima, and Bakugou all sitting in front of his legs. He had never felt so loved and appreciated before. His only wish would’ve been to get rid of the tears in his eyes so he could see the movie properly.

(And the fox did get a happy ending.)

(Maybe he could, too.)

They arrived at Aizawa’s little apartment on campus after midnight, where Yamada was still grading papers in the kitchen in his pajamas. It was weird seeing his hair down, even if he had already seen it so many times before. “Hey, babe,” he said as he glanced up before doing a double take. “And hey to you, too, little listener! What brings you

here so late?”

Hitoshi glanced at Aizawa, and hopefully conveyed his plea for help with his eyes. Thankfully he understood.

“We’ll talk in the morning,” the man said quietly, and his tone obviously made the other instantly alert, so he was quick to ease his husband’s nerves. “Everything is okay now. Just know we’ll have another reason to ask Nezu for a bigger apartment.”

Yamada seemed to understand immediately, while Hitoshi most certainly did not. “Gotcha.” He turned to him with a kind expression. “I can show you to the guest room. Although I guess it’s your room now, unless Nezu wants to actually give us some more space, and he’s gonna have to if Eri’s gonna be living here, too, the little demon mouse-“

“My room?” he asked, almost in a daze. “Am I . . . missing something here?”

“Yeah, your stuff to put in your room, but we’ll figure that out later. You’ll still sleep in the dorms of course, but this will be for breaks and school vacations.” Aizawa gave him sly smile - the same one he had whenever he handed out a multiple choice quiz and made all but one of the answers “B.” “I told you I would get you out of there, didn’t I?”

“Wait. You mean . . .”

His smile just grew. “You said I was like a father to you, right-“

His words cut off with a grunt as Hitoshi practically tackled him in a

hug.

His throat was tight, but he somehow managed to speak. "*Thank you*."

(Because *this*? This was all he had ever really wanted, for as long as he could remember.)

And Hitoshi would be sure not tell anyone how choked up Aizawa sounded when he ran his fingers through his hair and answered, "No problem, problem child."

Yamada joined the hug not too long after that, and for a wonderful moment, they all just stood in the kitchen, not caring about the rest of the world.

They both led him to his room shortly after that, where for once he found himself actually able to fall asleep, even if it was on a bumpy old guest mattress that they promised to replace as soon as possible. Because for the first time in a long, long time, he felt like he was *home*.

And he had never slept so soundly in his life.

Chapter End Notes

tw: panic attacks, referenced abusive foster care homes, muzzling children, implied/referenced child abuse

Bakugou and Shinso: Aizawa's like a dad to me
Everyone else: *surprised pikachu*

I've always liked the headcanon that shinso was muzzled as a child but I've also wondered how his voice changer would play into that. And if the quirk is making them feel their true emotions, not able to suppress them, then I think he would have

not great time. And I absolutely adore dadzawa with shinso, and if you saw a bit of Bakugou-shinso sibling-ness here, you'd be right ;)
Also, I got the zootopia dialogue right from the script, so that's fun! I love that movie lol, I was watching it while planning this fic and I was like "wAIT A MINUTE-"

Anyway, I'm excited for kaminari, he's the one I'm going to be shoving all my personal issues onto 😶 what can I say, projection is an unhealthy form of therapy I gladly partake in
(Issues such as.. this fic: *gets one slightly negative comment* Me: oh no. they Hate it. They'll never like what's coming, I've ruined this, and no one will ever read my work again, im a failure-)

Sunshine

Chapter Notes

tw in end notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kyoka was really, *really* worried about Shinso, but didn't let it show until he finally left with Aizawa. Once he was gone, she pretty much turned into a crying mess - along with pretty much everyone else.

She knew that she normally wasn't an emotional person - she was supposed to be a *rock*, the sturdy friend, the one that lightened the mood, the one that never *wavered* and was there to lean on whenever she was needed - but she couldn't - well, she couldn't *help it*. Finding out about how horribly he had been treated made something deep inside of her shatter into a million and one pieces.

Maybe it was the fact the she had been the one to realize how horrific his past really was. Maybe it was the fact that he looked like he expected to be hit at every sudden movement. Maybe it was the way he had clung to Aizawa like a child. A child that never received any love.

(*It wasn't pretty*, he had said.)

But she just. Couldn't. Stop. *Crying*.

Maybe it was just because this was the last straw.

Because it wasn't just him, was it? It was so, *so* many of them. Midoriya was a victim of their quirkest society, and so was Kirishima, whom she had thought to be so strong in his own confidence. Hell,

even *Bakugou* had been raised to believe he was better than everyone else for so long just because of his quirk, and now he was left with a weird mix between a superiority and inferiority complex (which she knew he would never admit under threat of death). And Todoroki-

. . . Oh god, *Todoroki*.

She started crying even harder when she thought about him all over again.

Everyone had tried to put on a brave face for Todoroki when he was still there the other night, but as soon as he had gone to bed, most of them had immediately gone off the deep end in terms of emotional distress. So many of them hadn't slept that night, and even Kyoka had let out a few tears, because at that point her heart was still being held together by a few frayed strings.

Until tonight, when those strings had finally snapped.

Why did everything have to be so fucking *awful*?

"Hey," Momo said when she saw Kyoka's silent crying turn to silent sobs. She put an arm around her and didn't really try to mask her own tears. "It's gonna be alright."

Kyoka nodded silently as she rested he head on the Momo's chest and wrapped her arms around her, not caring how ridiculous she probably looked.

(The taller girl had started getting a bit fuller these past few weeks, which was incredible - she had been dangerously underweight, and

only because her parents had had her on that fucking ridiculous diet. With her quirk, that was a *huge* problem. Kyoka had nearly gone and kicked her parents' asses when she found out about it all.)

"This thing is really just a crying quirk," Kyoka said with a small shrug. "I mean, really. That's all it's good for."

"Amen to that," Kaminari said dazedly. He wasn't looking too hot himself, tear tracks painting his face like some damn watercolor piece.

"Do you think he'll be okay?" Midoriya asked softly. He, as per usual, looked the worst out of all of them, because of course he did. Kyoka almost smiled at how compassionate he really was and how much he cared about all of them.

"I'm sure he will be," Kyoka said, doing her best to sound steady. It didn't really work. "Aizawa won't let him get hurt anymore. And we won't either."

They sat there for a long time, but they didn't watch anymore movies that night. She had a feeling they wouldn't be sleeping any time soon.

The next morning during class was when they all saw Shinso again, when he arrived with Aizawa right before the bell rang. Kyoka tried her best not to stare at him as he went to his seat, but she probably wasn't doing a very good job. He surprisingly didn't look that bad - in fact, he looked more well-rested than she had seen him in a long time. Which was more than she could say about herself, at least.

When homeroom ended everyone basically swarmed him.

“Are you okay?” was the first thing out of her own mouth, which was pretty much what everyone else was asking, too.

“I’m alright now, I promise.” He said this with a smile, and Kyoka felt her shoulders - and vaguely saw all her classmates’, too - literally sag in relief. “Aizawa’s adopting me, so that’s nice.”

“He’s *what*?!” Kaminari screeched.

“I knew it.”

“Shoto, that’s *not* the same thing,” Midoriya said with an eye roll.

It was later in the week when it happened. So many secrets had been spilled that Kyoka wasn’t sure why it caught her so off guard. Maybe it was because she was so sleep deprived. Maybe it was the fact that she truly wasn’t expecting this one - Todoroki had always been somewhat sad, as had Shinso. And maybe all the others had been shocking, but this was just on a whole other level entirely.

(Maybe it was because it was her best friend, this time.)

“This is the third time this week you’ve forgotten your homework,” Aizawa deadpanned. “I get that you actually forgot it, since you can’t lie. But why can’t you just, I don’t know, put it your bag?”

Snickers rose throughout the class as Kaminari smiled sheepishly. “I guess I’m just that airheaded, sir,” he said matter-of-factly.

Aizawa rolled his eyes. “I know you think this a joke, but you are in the top hero school in the country. Try a little harder, okay?”

“I am trying, sir,” Kaminari said, a little more serious. Nobody picked up on the change though, since the smile was still half on his face.

(She should’ve noticed.)

(Maybe she didn’t because she was so tired.)

(Damn it, she should’ve noticed a *long* time ago.)

“Well, you need to try harder. It’s not going to be like this when you go pro. Missing paperwork could mean legal repercussions, not just grades. You need to start taking these classes seriously-“

“I am taking them seriously!” Kaminari yelled, smile suddenly gone. “I’m trying *so hard*!”

Kyoka felt her mouth drop open faster than it ever had in her life. It was like a switch had been flipped in the electric user - one second he was the same happy-go-lucky guy, and the next he was staring at Aizawa like he had been told his entire family was dead.

What was going on?

Kaminari looked down at his desk, seemingly unaware of the tension and questioning stares around him. “I’m trying so hard,” he repeated quietly. “And no one ever notices - they just notice how much I fail. I don’t know what’s wrong with me. Everyone else can do all of this stuff without a problem.”

He stopped to glare up at Aizawa, but the look was so full of pain it probably didn’t have the effect he had been wanting. “No one else stares at their textbook for hours without even seeing it! No one else has to laugh off their stupidity because they don’t even understand why they don’t understand anything!”

Aizawa looked at the boy with wide eyes. “Kaminari-“

He continued like he didn’t even hear him, slamming his fists onto the table so hard Kyoka felt herself flinch, though she knew it had nothing to do with her quirk or how loud it had been. “And I have to play dumb too! Because if I’m good at some things that means if I’m not good at other things I’m not *trying* hard enough! So everyone will always see me as the dumb blond that no one will ever understand!”

“Kaminari,” Aizawa said again, obviously at a loss at the sudden shift in his student. “I’m sure that’s not true-“

“Of course it’s true,” Kaminari said almost bitterly, but it mostly just sounded like a statement of sad acceptance. “I’m under a truth quirk. I can’t *lie*. I know what they all think of me. They all openly call me the dumb, idiot friend all the time! Why does no one else’s brain skip from one idea to the other? Why am I - why am I *like this*?”

Was Kaminari . . . *crying*?

“I hate myself most of the time,” he said as a tear rolled down his cheek and landed on the desk. “I can’t do anything right. And don’t even get me started on my *quirk*-“

“Do you really think all that?” Kyoka found herself whispering. Was that a lump in her throat? Was she about to start crying, too?

Oh wait, her vision was blurry. She already was.

(Hadn’t she cried enough already? Hadn’t she had her heart broken enough for one lifetime?)

Kaminari jolted, like he had forgotten they were all still there. Usually, that would’ve been funny. But now . . .

“Oh, now I’ve done it,” he said weakly, standing up abruptly. “Can’t even remember where I *am* anymore-“

“Kaminari, *wait*-“

But her voice died in her throat, because the blond was already out the door, book bag forgotten.

“What was that?” Kirishima asked shakily, like everything didn’t just change in a heartbeat for the hundredth time.

Everybody walked back to the dorms together, with the exception of

their happy-go-lucky electric friend. Although, now Kyoka could only think of how much of that must have been an act.

Not many words were exchanged, but Kyoka didn't mind. Her thoughts were running too fast for a conversation of any kind.

Her mind flashed to every instance she had made fun of Kaminari for his lack of book smarts . . . or street smarts . . . or any sort of smarts. She hadn't meant any of it, of course she hadn't! He was one of her best friends. But she also remembered all of the other times everyone else in the class had done the same, over and over and over and-

And maybe Kyoka had believed the teasing, deep down. That he was honestly dumber than the rest of them just because he couldn't focus on a *textbook*. God, what had she been *thinking*?

Kaminari had every right to be mad at all of them, but instead he had chosen to place the hatred on himself. That was absolutely *ridiculous*. But . . .

If Kyoka had somewhat believed it when only joking about it in passing, what did being told he was dumb every second of every day do to his subconscious? Was this something new at UA or had this been going on for even longer?

Some of the words Kaminari had said hit her like a punch to the gut as she remembered them, and it was just as painful as hearing them the first time, if not more so.

They just notice how much I fail.

And really, he was right. Nobody ever said a word to him if he did something right unless it was to mock him for not doing something wrong.

Of course it's true.

He really thought all of that was true. Kyoka remembered something Bakugou had said about how you could think something was true and still say it even if it was completely false.

I know what they all think of me.

She was going to punch herself in the face.

"I think you were right," Todoroki suddenly said at the back of the group.

Midoriya sighed. "Yeah, probably."

"You *knew* about it?!" Shinso suddenly hissed, rounding on the green haired teen. "You knew that he-"

"Oh, no! Not about that!" Midoriya said quickly, waving his arms around like he always did. "I just have this idea, it's only a theory, we don't know if it's actually happening or if it's just speculation or if this whole thing is just getting to us in the worst ways or-"

"Deku, shut up and get the point," Bakugou deadpanned. He looked just as emotionless as always, but Kyoka could see the hint of distress

in his eyes that he was trying so hard to hide.

“Oh, er, right.” Midoriya rubbed the back of his neck. “And just so you know, Aizawa said not to tell you so please don’t get mad-“

“*Deku*.”

“Alright, alright. The quirk isn’t just affecting our words, it’s affecting our emotions.”

Nobody spoke for the longest time.

Kyoka felt like her brain was imploding in on itself.

“That explains so much,” Kirishima said finally. “Like . . . so, so much.”

“And you just let us, what?” Shinso said, clearly a bit ticked off, and Kyoka winced at the thought of his panic attacks the other day. This really *did* explain a lot. “Think we were emotionally overwhelmed for no reason?”

“I’m really sorry,” Midoriya said quietly. “Aizawa said since there was no actual proof, it wasn’t the best idea to say anything. And that it would only make everyone feel worse.”

“Well, that’s fair,” Kyoka found herself saying, not bothering to stop herself from sounding just as angry as Shinso. “I *definitely* feel worse.”

Because really? It made so much sense. Everyone was so much more emotional than they normally were - herself included. It explained Shinso's panic attacks and Kirishima's break down and ever-stoic Todoroki crying his eyes out over a long-dead brother.

It explained Kaminari crying over a piece of homework.

"So, what is it even doing?" she asked, trying to not sound shaken. "Is it hyping up our negative emotions or something?"

"I don't think so," Midoriya said, because of course it wasn't that simple- "I think it's amplifying all of them - er, not *amplifying* them, per say - and not just the bad either, since so many people confessed feelings for each other so fast - in a sense that we can't "lie" to ourselves about how we're feeling. Like, when something horrible happens and you push it down. It's like when PTSD develops. We can't just ignore the bad feelings, now."

"That's so ridiculous!" Bakugou yelled. "So if we have repressed trauma it'll just fucking bubble to the surface?!"

"It makes sense," Tokoyami said solemnly. "The darkness often has ways of showing up when we least expect it."

"Oh, can it with your emo shit."

So was that why she confessed to Momo? Kyoka couldn't help but wonder if their whole new relationship was built on some quirk-based lie. She didn't want the only good thing to come from all this to be some twisted trick. She didn't want to wonder for the rest of her life if Momo really loved her or if she was just whacked up on some

toddler's power-

"Hey, I know what you're thinking," Momo said quietly, grabbing her hand and giving it a squeeze. "No, this wasn't forced onto us. It was our true feelings, just dug up a little bit."

Kyoka nodded, trying to keep her composure. Which was a little easier now, if only because she knew *why* she was so upset and that helped fill her with anger instead. "Yeah, you're right. You and that big brain of yours," she said somewhat teasingly. Momo simply smiled fondly and bumped their shoulders together.

"Guys . . ." Kirishima said, and Kyoka looked over and saw heartbreak in his eyes. "If we can't lie to ourselves, and it's all true, then Kaminari . . ."

Kyoka felt her stomach plummet right back to the floor.

Kaminari really felt that way. Maybe he lied to himself a lot, or maybe he really just felt like that all the time. She hoped it was the former, and the thought made her feel better for a moment. But then Kyoka remembered something else he had said.

I hate myself most of the time.

So no, it wasn't the quirk. And even if it was, it was still his true feelings coming to light. Which somehow might've been worse, because then he would've been lying to himself about being happy.

Why am I like this? he had asked. Kyoka wanted to give him a hug and tell him he was amazing just the way he was, but she couldn't.

He was gone because she had pushed him away.

Denki was going to pass out.

He was going to fall over and die, he was sure of it. Although, could he fall over if he was already on the floor? He supposed he could if he tried hard enough.

His breathing was on hyperdrive, but somehow he still wasn't managing to get enough air into his lungs. He started feeling lightheaded, and a rush of fear went through him at the thought of one of his classmates finding him passed out on the ground. He didn't need them to think he was even more pathetic than he already was.

Unfortunately, stubbornness was not his forte, unlike Bakugou. He still struggled to intake air, like the knockoff, broken-drown vacuum cleaner he was, and was now probably very close to actually keeling over.

He barely heard the knock on the door right behind him.

"Kaminari?" That was Kirishima. His voice was soft, like he was approaching a frightened animal. "You in there, bro?"

He tried to tell him to leave, that he was fine - which he knew wouldn't have come out of his mouth regardless, because *that* would be the biggest lie of the night - but a wheeze just escaped him instead. He wasn't sure how loud it was, but from the sharp intake of breath

behind him, it must've sounded pretty not good.

"Hang in there, Kami," Kirishima said. "Can we come in? Knock on the door if we can."

He felt his head start to spin. He wasn't sure, but he thought he heard whispered words outside his door. Oh right, Kirishima had said "we" hadn't he? He wasn't alone.

Did Denki want to be alone? He wasn't sure. He was just pretty certain that if he kept breathing like this he was going to tap out.

Actually, his vision was getting dark, wasn't it?

Maybe if he tried closing his eyes for a moment. . .

He must've actually passed out, like a frickin' loser, because next thing he knew he was lying on the floor with a blob of red over his face.

"Breath, in and out, okay?" They sounded panicked, and oh, that was Kirishima. He must've come in when he heard him slump over. At least that answered the stupid question of if he could fall over if he was already on the ground.

He followed Kirishima's breathing, and it was much easier to control now that he had something to listen to and think, *oh, that's normal, isn't it?*

He managed to get his head to stop spinning and his eyes to focus

again, and saw the worried face of his friend above him. He shifted his gaze to see the rest of their friends, who all looked more or less the same. Shinso was closest, whose eye bags seemed much deeper than they had that morning, and Sero and Bakugou were right behind him. The angry blond actually looked concerned for once, which nearly made him laugh, but his lip only quirked upwards a tiny bit before crashing right back down.

Jiro was still in the hallway, like she was scared to get closer for some reason, and she looked *wrecked*. Which he hadn't been expecting - great, was she going to pity him now? Or was this true concern?

(She had looked just the same the other night when Shinso had revealed his oh-so-wonderful past. So maybe she really did care.)

(She was his best friend, after all.)

"You good?" Kirishima asked somewhat breathlessly. Denki looked back over to see him still staring at him intently with heavy concern.

He mustered up enough energy to give him a smile. "Other than clonking out on the ground?"

Bakugou snorted. "He's fine, idiots."

"Oh, you had us so fucking *worried*," Sero said, bringing a hand to his forehead like he was going to pass out next. "We were just talking and then Jiro heard you just *fall*-"

"We're just glad you're okay," Shinso said, rather softly, leaning back onto his ankles in relief. "I don't know what we would've done if you

weren't."

"He's not *okay*," Jiro suddenly hissed. "Do you not remember why we came up here in the first place?"

If Denki could've frozen, he would've - but he already wasn't moving. Still, it felt like ice had been poured into his veins and down his back.

"They meant physically, genius," Bakugou said, and Denki could practically hear the eye roll without even looking at him.

"I know that," she said, twisting her earlobes aggressively. "But he's still not okay."

"*Are* you okay?" Kirishima asked him instead of arguing with her, worry still ever-present in his eyes. "You know, emotionally or whatever?"

Denki started to sit up, and all of them jolted like they wanted to push him right back down. He waved off their concern, but nonetheless took Kirishima's hand as he sat up and leaned back against the now-open door.

"Not really," he said against his will. "I thought that was perfectly clear."

Kirishima winced, and Jiro, who had just come around the corner, smirked slightly before all traces of happiness disappeared from her completely.

And this - *this* wasn't supposed to happen.

He was supposed to be the friend that never stopped smiling. He was supposed to be the class clown, the one other people depended on to lighten the mood no matter how stupid it made him look. They didn't laugh with him the same way they did with others - with Denki, they were always laughing *at* him, not with him. Which was okay, because that was his role in the group. That was the part he was meant to play, the dumb blond that made them say, "*Oh, Kaminari*," like he was some sort of child.

Yep. He was fine with it.

But now they were all here, staring at him and knowing that no, he wasn't always happy, he didn't want to be the dumb one, he didn't want to be looked down on just because he didn't understand geometry.

He had been fine keeping this secret for most of the time, so what had happened? Maybe he was just so sleep deprived from finding out about Shinso, and even Todoroki. How he had lied awake at night, unable to sleep because he just kept thinking about how awful it all was. He knew a lot of other people in the class had been having the same problem, so maybe he wasn't that much of a mess.

Regardless, he had still screwed up once more. Way to go, Denki.

"I'm here!" a female voice suddenly screeched, followed by Mina barreling around the corner and almost falling to the floor from her momentum. She leaned down, hands resting on her knees as she she tried to control her rapid breaths. "I'm so sorry, I-" she paused to gasp for air- "I had to change out my tampon."

All of the guys, Denki included, suddenly turned very red in the face.

“TMI, Mina,” Sero said rather uncomfortably when no one else spoke.

And then, for some stupid, unknown reason, Denki laughed.

He literally started crying from laughter, unable to stop the hysterics that escaped him. Soon, everyone else was laughing too - even Bakugou, who was hiding his chuckles behind his hand.

It was true, what they said: the higher the stress, the more you laughed.

It was just so - so *ridiculous*, and unnecessary, and so *different* than everything else that had come from the stupid quirk recently that they couldn’t help it. It was nice. So nice to just laugh and not worry.

Not worry about how his life was over, or how he was a failure, or how he was probably going to get kicked out of school if his grades didn’t improve soon, or how his parents might fucking disown him if he flunked out of high school, or how all his friends would turn their backs on him once they realized how much of joke he really was-

He realized he was the only one still laughing. Wait, no - his laughter had turned into outright sobbing.

Wonderful.

“Hey - *hey*,” Kirishima whispered, reaching forward like he going to

hug him but stopping at the last minute, deciding to just put a hand on his shoulder instead. “It’s alright, okay? It’s gonna be alright.”

Denki put his face in his hands and tried to stop crying, which he was failing at miserably. He shook his head. “But - but it’s *not*.”

“And that’s okay, too,” Shinso said softly. Denki peeked through his fingers to see him kneeling right next to him still. “We can help you make it okay.”

He shook his head again, trying not to choke on his own tears. “I don’t know how you can help me not be an idiot, but I appreciate the thought.”

“Oh, *Kaminari*,” Jiro said suddenly, dropping down to the floor in front of him like her strings had been cut. It was what she often said, but the tone was completely different than usual. It was normally said in exasperation, or even fondness, but now it just sounded tired and heartbroken. “You’re not-“ she took a shuddered breath and put a hand on his knee. “You’re not an *idiot*.”

“Of course I am,” he said, wiping at his eyes as he tried to physically force himself to stop crying. “That’s what you all have been saying this whole time, right?”

“We weren’t . . . we weren’t *serious*, man,” Kirishima said quietly. “You just . . . You didn’t seem to mind. You always seemed happy.”

“I guess I am sometimes,” Denki said with a shrug. “Like, I’m glad I can make you all happy. And I’m happy when I’m with you and I can pretend you see me as an equal.”

“What kind of bullshit is that?!” Bakugou snapped. Denki looked over at him with wide eyes and saw that he was glaring at him. “Of course we see you as an equal! You’re one of my best friends and this group wouldn’t be the same without you.”

Everybody stared at him.

“God *fucking* damn it.” He looked about ready to rip his own hair out. “If this quirk makes me say one more stupid thing I’m barricading myself in my room.”

Denki didn’t care, because he was *not* crying even more now. Nope. He wasn’t looking at Bakugou through the tears in his eyes like he wanted to give him the biggest hug in the history of hugs.

“Can I hug you?” he asked anyway, despite the fact that he knew Bakugou absolutely did not do hugs. Except for Kirishima, but that was a given.

Bakugou looked like he wanted to punt him into the sun. Denki prepared himself for the worst-

“Of course you can.”

-and then felt his jaw drop to the floor.

Bakugou looked like regret had crash landed on his chest, but nonetheless begrudgingly opened his arms. Because, try as he might to deny it, he was still telling the truth.

And that made Denki's heart soar.

It turned out that Bakugou was absolutely amazing at giving hugs. He found this out as he crashed into him and wrapped his arms around him, trying not to sob into his shirt. His strong arms felt so safe, and he suddenly found himself jealous of Kirishima's hug privileges.

The rest of them were amazing huggers, too. They all piled on not too long after.

"Oi, I said I'd give him a hug, not you lot!"

"Too late," Mina said in a sing-song voice. "We're here to stay, Blasty!"

Bakugou grumbled something under his breath about annoying pink haired weirdos.

"You know we're here for you, Kaminari, right?" That was Shinso, who was part of this weird hug pile too by the sounds of it. He also didn't really do hugs, so Denki was suddenly that much more grateful for his friends.

He blinked the spontaneous moisture from his eyes. "I guess I know now."

"Alright, that's enough," Bakugou suddenly growled, not-so-forcefully pushing them all off. "I have limits, idiots."

Kirishima smacked him on the arm. Bakugou gave him an incredulous look, and they then proceeded to have a conversation with just their facial expressions.

The blond finally groaned at the end of their telepathic communication. “I didn’t - ugh, why is being nice so *hard* - I don’t mean you’re actually an idiot, Dunce Face. Er-“ he shook his head slightly as if to clear the etch-a-sketch in his brain. “*Kaminari*. I just call you all that cause you’re like, *my* idiots or whatever, ‘cause you always do the dumbest shit together. Like prank Aizawa and get detention for a week.”

Denki laughed weakly. “Yeah, that was pretty dumb. But his face? Priceless.”

“You know I never meant it either, right?” Jiro said, at his side once more. She gently took his hand, and Denki looked up and saw the overwhelming guilt and tears in her eyes. It made his heart break a little once he got over his shock. “I never - *never* meant to make you feel like that. I’m so, so *sorry*.”

He squeezed her hand reassuringly and wiped at his eyes with his free hand. “It’s not - not your fault. Any of you. I’ve felt like this most of my life, like I’m behind everyone else, and every negative thing anyone says just hits me so much harder than it should. I can’t focus on anything important, I can’t do *anything* right-“

Someone put a hand to his mouth to stop his rambling. He was immensely grateful, because he didn’t want them to hear any more about his problems if he could help it. He vaguely realized he was crying again as the hand disappeared.

He followed it with his eyes and saw in connected to Mina on his other side. Then- “Kami, I think you have ADHD.”

“I . . .” His mind was blank, like he had overused his quirk several times in a row. “What?”

“ADHD,” she said again, tilting her head and giving him a sad smile. “It fits all your symptoms. Like how you’re always fidgeting with Ojiro’s tail, and like, looking out the window during class.”

“What . . . what do the windows have to do with anything?” he asked, still not fully processing what she was saying.

“You can’t focus because your brain works differently.” She tapped her temple a few times. “You don’t produce enough serotonin, or like, dopamine? I can’t remember. I just know a bit because my brother has it.”

“But . . .” He wracked his brain, trying to figure out why a sinking feeling was suddenly engulfing his chest. “That doesn’t, like, exist.”

“What?” Shinso asked, bewildered. “Why wouldn’t it exist?”

“It’s like an excuse, right?” he said, finally remembering. He was so young, and it was when his parents still had faith that he would do better in school when he got older.

“Mom, I was reading this book from the library and I think I might have the thingy in it,” a little him spoke.

“Oh?” his mother had said, smiling. “And what’s that?”

“I think it’s called ADHD?”

Her smile had dropped immediately. “That’s not real, Denki, and even if it was, you don’t have it.”

“But I can’t focus, and I can’t sit still in class-“

“That’s you just being lazy,” his father had suddenly cut in, reading the newspaper in his big armchair. “You just need to study more. And no son of mine is gonna have some sort of mental disorder, you hear?”

There was a dangerous edge to his voice then, so little him had quickly nodded. “Okay. I’ll try harder.”

“I just have to try harder,” he said, shrugging. “Like Aizawa said, if I had just put the damn paper in my bag-“

“That’s not what ADHD is, Kami,” Sero said. “It’s not like you could’ve “tried harder” to remember your paper. Or like you could “try harder” when you’re already staring at a textbook with nothing to distract you.”

“But I get distracted anyway-“

“Exactly!” Bakugou snapped. “You’re just wired all different. It’s why my tutoring never fucking helps you, so I’m gonna change the way I do it so you can actually learn shit for once.”

Denki stared at him and felt his chest begin to shake. “You would, uh-“ He stopped to wipe his nose with his sleeve. “You would do that for me?”

Bakugou clicked his tongue. “Of course I would. And this fucking quirk better end soon or I’m going to lose my mind.”

“But you’re so nice!” Mina said, dragging out the last word and leaning on him dramatically. He promptly pushed her off with a scowl.

“You’re all gonna regret this.”

“Sure we will,” she said in a sing-song voice.

“You’ll let us help you, right Sparky?” Jiro asked. He looked back over at her and saw she was still an emotional mess, which was so bizarre to look at that he didn’t say anything in response. “You’ll let us help you with everything?”

He stared at her. He really didn’t know she cared so much about him.

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, the book had said. It made sense. He was definitely hyperactive and majorly lacked attention, but he had also read about the other things - inability to start projects or hear people correctly, or even thinking everyone hated you for no reason. Or having a really bizarre memory, such as not remembering an important homework assignment but remembering a random book you read seven years ago.

Yeah, that tracked.

“What if you’re all wrong?” he muttered. “What if it’s all just . . . in my head?”

“And where the fuck else would it be? Up your ass?” Bakugou said, exasperated. “It’s a fucking mental disorder. It’s gonna be in your head.”

It was like a damn light bulb went off in Denki’s brain.

“Well, when you put it like that I just sound dumb,” he said, rubbing his head like it hurt from the revelation. Which, to be fair, it kind of did.

“Damn it, you’re not *dumb*!” Kyoka exclaimed, and Denki almost flinched at her loud tone. “If you say one more self deprecating thing, I swear to-“

“Alright, alright, I get it,” he said with a laugh. He realized he was still holding her hand and gave it another squeeze. “I’ll try to like . . . love myself, or whatever.”

“Good. We’ve all missed your sunshine smile.” She wiped a stray tear from her face and gave him a sly smile of her own. “And we’ll all yell at you when you don’t.”

“Okay, fair.” He shook his head at her antics, and realized another tear was trailing down his face. “What is with all this *crying*?!” he finally said. “I mean, I get it. I’m sad. But like, I don’t ever cry this much and I’ve never seen Jiro cry once in my *life*-“

“Its like Midoriya said,” Sero explained unhelpfully with a shrug. “Emotions are stupid.”

Denki just stared at him. “What the hell are you talking about?”

“Oh my god,” Mina groaned, slapping herself in the face. “We forgot to tell him.”

“Tell me what?”

“Good going, morons.”

“You didn’t tell him either!”

“Well it’s not my fucking fault Deku kept it to himself-“

“Tell me *what*?!”

They then explained it to him, and if Denki’s brain was hurting before, it was exploding now.

“No *fucking wonder*-“

“I think Kaminari’s going to be okay.”

Izuku looked up from his textbook to see Shoto walking out of the elevator towards him. He automatically moved over so he could sit down, and promptly leaned his whole body on him once he did.

“That’s a relief,” he said. “Who told you?”

“I went by his room to go check on him,” he said with a shrug. “I didn’t open the door, but it sounded like all of his friends were playing video games with him. They all sounded quite happy.”

“That’s good,” Izuku said, putting his head on Shoto’s shoulder as he closed his eyes. “That’s *really* good. I don’t think I’d be able to handle anymore breakdowns. I’m almost out of tears.”

He felt Shoto chuckle beside him. “I don’t think you could ever run out of those.”

“Wanna bet? Actually, no, I’ll definitely lose.”

Shoto smiled lightly and put an arm over his shoulders. “You just care so much. There’s nothing wrong with that.”

Izuku reached over and grabbed his hand with a small shrug. “I guess so.”

“Hey, listen to me.” Shoto squeezed his hand, and Izuku looked up to see a loving smile on his face that made his heart combust on sight. “I mean it. You’re wonderfully caring and you’ll make an amazing hero. I’m just so glad you chose to love me.”

That last part seemed to be uttered against the dual-haired boy's will, as he suddenly turned sheepish and bright red. Izuku hoped he wasn't implying that he thought he wasn't enough for him.

"You're right. I did choose to love you, and it makes me happy every single day."

Shoto smiled once more, and it was brighter than his fire could ever hope to be.

They sat in companionable silence for a while after that, simply existing together. Izuku continued to read his book while Shoto pulled out a tiny crossword puzzle. It was wonderful.

(So much better than what was about to happen. Afterwards, Izuku would desperately wish that he could go back to this moment and just sit in oblivious silence for a little while longer. To have one more moment of peace before it was ripped away.)

They were having another movie night that night - they were practically every other day at this point - so they didn't bother to move as their classmates began to filter into the common room as dinner hours came and passed. It wasn't every night that they ate together, so on nights like tonight they simply ate whatever they could find.

As it neared seven - the unofficial time that the movie nights had begun to start at - the self-proclaimed Bakusquad came out of the elevator doors, laughing and talking like nothing was wrong with the world.

“You lot are gonna give me a headache,” Katsuki muttered before heading off to the kitchen, most likely to heat up something he had already cooked.

“How are you feeling, Kaminari?” Tsu asked. She never really worried about awkwardness, that was for sure.

“I’m doing better,” he said, smiling. “We came to the conclusion that I probably have ADHD.”

He suddenly froze, like he definitely didn’t want everyone to know about it. He opened his mouth back up, probably to try and brush off what he had just said-

“That’s a very important thing to know about,” Iida said with a nod. “I would suggest asking Aizawa to help you get a formal diagnosis so UA can accommodate for your learning differences.”

Something shone in Kaminari’s eyes as he stared at Iida in apparent shock. Izuku suddenly noticed the area around his eyes was slightly pink. “Y-yeah. Sounds good.”

Then Uraraka and Katsuki came into the room at the same time. They locked eyes with each other, and immediately tension spiked.

Izuku really should’ve know this was coming. The girl hadn’t been at all satisfied with what Katsuki had told them about his quirk. And even though he explicitly stated that he knew it was no excuse for the years of bullying, Uraraka was still not convinced in the slightest.

It started out simple enough. “Why is it that you never even got a

detention for bullying Deku?" The sentence seemed to be asked against her will, since she knew Izuku didn't want her to start anything. But she didn't seem all that apologetic that she had asked.

"I told you I was suspended, Round Face."

And then it escalated.

It escalated a lot.

It escalated too much, too *fast*, that it left Izuku's head spinning dangerously as he tried to keep up with who was screaming at who. No one really even took sides - they were all trying to calm the two of them down from the hellfire of anger they were trapped in.

But even then, a few people started to argue with Uraraka. They didn't even say he was bad now, or that he was an irredeemable asshole - just that he probably got off a little too easy for tormenting him. Even his own friends were starting to look a little unsure of themselves, and Izuku could tell Katsuki saw it, too.

Did any of them care that Izuku didn't care in the slightest? No. Did they care that he had already realized what he had done was bad? No. He had to suffer for his actions, apparently.

Izuku was having *none* of it. "That's *bullshit*."

Uraraka turned to him with wide eyes. Whether it was from his words or the cursing, he wasn't sure.

“I’m not saying he had to be expelled or anything!” Uraraka shouted before turning right back around. “But have you ever had any real consequences for your actions!?”

Katsuki glared at the her, and a heat was radiating from him that seemed unlike anything he had ever put off before. “I *damn* well had consequences for my actions - Deku already told you!”

“Yeah, well calling your *mommy* wasn’t enough of a punishment for breaking his *arm*!”

Izuku tried to reach out to her- “Well, he also got suspended, right? And the school thought it was enough, so-“

“Well,” Uraraka said, rounding on Izuku and slapping his hand away, “It’s not good enough for me!”

Something inside Katsuki visibly *snapped*, like something deep inside him had been shattered beyond repair.

Somehow Izuku knew something big was going to come out, as if the air around them was suddenly twenty degrees colder. Call it some sort of sixth sense, but he just knew.

He just didn’t realize how big it would really be.

“So getting beaten until I couldn’t see straight and locked in a closet for three fucking days isn’t *good enough for you*?!”

The silence that followed his scream was deafening, and Katsuki took one look at everyone's shell shocked faces before bolting right out the front door.

...

And Izuku, funnily enough, was not out of tears.

Chapter End Notes

tw: self hatred, self deprecation, panic attacks, fainting, depression, mentioned disregard for mental disorders, emotional neglect; mentioned severe child abuse and neglect

:P

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Bakugou, Part Two

Chapter Notes

tw in end notes

Uh,, this is v long,, fair warning it gets worse before it gets better

Just a note I don't think this is canon I just thought it was the most painful headcanon to use hahahah

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki couldn't believe what he had just done.

The one thing. The *one. Goddamn. Thing*. The one thing he had tried to keep a secret with this quirk from hell over him. The one thing he knew he couldn't come back from. The one thing he swore to take to his grave.

They all knew about it, now.

He was going to scream.

Scratch that, he was definitely screaming.

He found himself in the middle of the woods on his knees, where he knew for a fact they weren't patrolling at the moment because when he had nightmares he came out here and ran until he felt like death and had memorized the patrol schedules as a result. He was all alone with these stupid trees and therefore didn't bother stopping the raw, guttural *shrieks* that ripped from his throat.

Of course you fucked it up, brat. No one will ever love you when they

realize how much of a villain you really are.

He kindly told his mother's voice to fuck off.

Would they think of him as a villain now, some traitorous part of his brain wondered? Would they think that when they realized he was so horrible that even his own parents couldn't stand the sight of him? After all, they already thought he got off too easy for what he had done, he thought bitterly. That's how most people saw villains that walked free.

He let out a few more screams and slammed his fists into the ground for good measure.

He screamed until he felt like he had been eating glass and then screamed some more. How could he have been so *stupid*? He was so fucking close, too. Not even another *week* and he would've been home free. And he had lasted this long! It was only because fucking *Pink Cheeks* of all people had made him feel so angry and indignant and small and *yes I know that doing bad things means bad things happen who the fuck do you think you're talking to-*

Because nothing ever worked out for him, not really. He gets a super cool quirk and everyone at school loves him? Suddenly he's a brat that doesn't know his own weaknesses anymore, and he needs to be *reminded*. He wins the sports festival? He says no to the award because he doesn't think he's earned it, and they restrain him like a fucking dog and force him into a panic attack in front of millions. He gets an internship offer with Best Jeanist? The hero only wants to change every single thing about him. He goes to a fucking summer camp of all things? The League of Villains decides he's their newest recruit.

And that was it, wasn't it? He was always going to be seen as a villain. His mother reminded him of that all the time. She was worse than

most, accenting her words with a well-aimed punch or kick or just anything and everything she could get her hands on.

He should've - dammit, he should've been able to *not say anything*. He had been doing that his whole fucking life. It was why this truth quirk was so easy to handle - he had already had the urge to spill everything to everyone all the time.

Please help me, he had been saying with his eyes ever since elementary school. The anger only served to mask his fear, because he was terrified of anyone finding out, yet somehow he still desperately wanted someone to know and take him away from it all.

Please. Help me. Save me.

Save me, since he was too fucking weak to save himself.

A horrible, sinking feeling began to take hold in his chest. They were going to want to ask him *questions*-

Why were so weak, Katsuki, why couldn't you get away, Katsuki, why did you let her do that to you, Katsuki, didn't you deserve that, Kacchan-

Fuck, he'd deal with that later - for now, he just kept on screaming.

Kirishima watched disconnectedly as Uraraka stuttered and shook.

“I didn’t mean-“ she was saying, trembling like a leaf as she began to cling to Midoriya for dear life. “I didn’t mean to-“

Kirishima had to focus on her, because the alternatives were going to eat him alive.

There was something in his chest that was weighing him down and a definitive lump in his throat he was going to ignore. He felt like ripping his own skin off - anything to get rid of this feeling that was taking root in him and crawling all over his flesh.

(It felt a lot like horror, but he knew that wasn’t quite it.)

He vaguely noticed how completely petrified and devastated everyone else looked, but made no move to comfort them like he normally would, because he just. Couldn’t. *Move*.

(He wasn’t sure how Katsuki had kept that secret for so long under the truth quirk, but it didn’t matter anymore. It was out. And now he was gone, and the one person that might’ve been able to make Kirishima feel better was *suffering* and he couldn’t do a *single thing about it*. He didn’t know where on earth he was, or if he would be coming back at all.)

(And it *hurt*.)

“Did you . . .” he heard himself croak in Midoriya’s general direction. “Did you know?”

He found himself staring into eyes that were so full of sorrow that he almost took a step back. Somehow he knew that Midoriya saw the

exact same thing reflecting back at him in his own. “*No*.” He was rubbing Uraraka’s back, but almost in a way that made it seem like he was comforting himself more than the girl. “I . . . I never knew. How could I-“ He suddenly choked on a sob and tears began to rush down his face. He looked completely and wholeheartedly broken. “How could I not have *known*? How did I miss it? Oh *god*, it’s so *obvious* now-“

“*Hey*.” Todoroki took one of his hands that was still wrapped around Uraraka. His voice sounded strained and Kirishima tried to not think about why. “You can’t blame yourself for this.”

Kirishima stopped paying attention after that. He couldn’t help it. His thoughts were too much for him to handle on their own, much less with a whole other heartbreaking conversation on top of it all.

He must have fallen to the floor, because his knees suddenly slammed into something hard. His legs couldn’t hold his own weight anymore, he realized as he fell back on his ankles.

He put his head in his hands and did his best not to shake. It didn’t really work, because when he looked at his hands they were trembling so bad he knew he wouldn’t have been able to hold onto a feather if he tried.

Katsuki didn’t show up for breakfast the next morning, and Kirishima wasn’t surprised in the slightest.

He had heard him come back to the dorms in the dead of night, hearing the door next to his open so late it was almost light outside, before it closed far softer than it ever had before. Kirishima hadn’t gotten a single ounce of sleep, and he doubted either of them would

anytime soon.

The only reason he had gone back to his dorm at all was because the rest of the squad had physically forced him to. He had wanted to stay there until sunrise, but they tried to convince him that he needed at least some sleep, and that Katsuki probably wouldn't even talk to him if he tried. They finally convinced him around two in the morning when the blond was still nowhere to be seen.

(He didn't comment on the fact that none of them looked like they had gotten any sleep, either.)

Everyone looked like zombies. Not a single smile could be seen, and it was almost dead silent. He avoided looking at his friends too much because he was knew how close he was to losing it.

And then he saw Uraraka, shakily eating cereal at the table.

And he lost it in a completely different way.

He wasn't sure why he did it. He wasn't sure what made him so irrationally angry. Maybe it was rational, and he was completely in the right to say the things he did. He just saw the girl that started it all and his blood boiled below his skin and his vision turned crimson. Maybe this was how Katsuki felt all the time with all the extra adrenaline pumping through his system. If so, he deserved a lot more credit.

He wasn't even sure of what he said, or how he said it, or how long it took, but by the end of it Uraraka was crying and he felt so overwhelmed with guilt and regret that he almost ran off just like Katsuki had the night before. But he didn't, if only because they would see each other in about twenty minutes when class began anyway.

“I’m so sorry,” he said instead, trying not to cry himself as he practically fell into a chair. “It’s not you that I’m mad at. I mean - I *am*, that was a really *shitty* thing to do - but like. It’s not *you*. I just want to - to-“

“To wrap him in a hug and set his parents on fire?” Midoriya asked with an emotional, tear-filled laugh.

“Yeah,” he said, lips quirking upward shakily. “That.”

“I’m sorry, too,” Uraraka said, wiping at her eyes. “I shouldn’t have pushed him. I shouldn’t have said those things - I shouldn’t have said he didn’t know what *consequences* were-“

She suddenly froze like ice had been poured down her shirt, almost jerking to a stop. She was silent for a moment before putting her head in her hands. “Oh, *god*-“

“What?” Kirishima asked desperately, feeling his heart begin to pound beneath his ribcage. She looked like she had seen a ghost, and with the way things were going, he almost didn’t want to know whatever she had realized.

“Remember- remember when I *slapped* him?” she said, breath hitching. “I didn’t even realize - he just - just shut down, didn’t he-”

He was right. He didn’t want to know.

She just broke all over again, tears falling into her breakfast like some

messed-up seasoning. Kirishima followed not long after.

(Midoriya was right. This quirk was messing with him so bad.)

(At least that was what he told himself.)

Kirishima was about five seconds from putting his head on his desk and never picking it back up when Aizawa asked where Katsuki was. He must have seen their distraught looks, their tear-stained faces. And yet he still asked, because attendance records trumped their feelings.

(He couldn't have known. He didn't look like the world was ending, and Katsuki had said that they stopped their counseling sessions because of the truth quirk, and Kirishima now realized it was because he didn't want Aizawa to find out.)

He bit his lip. He couldn't say anything - it wasn't his *right* to say anything. Katsuki had never wanted anyone to know, had never wanted for any of this to happen-

Kirishima could feel the raw fucking will power the class was using when nobody answered his question, either. Katsuki must've been there in spirit or something.

(They all knew they couldn't say anything. They had no right to, truth quirk or not, and yet he knew they all desperately *wanted* to-)

"He's not coming," Midoriya finally said, voice low and dangerous and

close to tears all at once. “He probably won’t for a while.”

Aizawa simply nodded and started the class.

Part of Kirishima wanted to scream at him until his throat turned raw. *He’s not okay! He’s never been okay! Go and do something about it! Don’t just sit there!*

How could he just sit in this classroom like nothing was wrong? How could he not immediately go find him and help him? How could he just walk by his dorm room that morning and not go inside, knocking for only a few minutes just to be answered with nothing? Why didn’t he break the door down and make sure he was okay?

(Maybe he was actually mad at himself.)

Katsuki didn’t show up until a few days later, at the end of the week. They hadn’t seen him at all - he didn’t come down to eat until all of them were either in class or asleep. (Kirishima knew this because he never really slept anymore, too busy tossing and turning and listening to Katsuki breathe through their shared wall. It was too slow. Too fast. Not close enough. But it was the only reason he even knew he was still *alive*.)

(He had tried reaching out to him. So many times. He pounded on his door, *begging* him to open it and let him in. There was no response, no change, not even an acknowledgement that he had been heard.)

(He was pretty sure he heard Midoriya do the same, fists pounding and voice pleading. The rest of their friends tried, too, but were still

met with absolutely nothing. Jiro had even tried listening to him, simply making sure he was okay when nothing else seemed to work.)

And even then Katsuki didn't actually show up for class. It was at the end of homeroom, when he simply burst through the door like he always did and went straight for Aizawa with a murderous glint in his eyes.

Kirishima just stared at him. It was the first time he was seeing the blond in what felt like an eternity, and to put it lightly, he looked like a wreck.

His hair was clearly unwashed and frazzled, like he had been pulling on it for who knew how long. The bags under his eyes were bigger than Shinsou's, his nails were bitten down almost to the end, and his knuckles all had scabs on them. He wasn't wearing his uniform - in fact, it looked like he hadn't changed clothes since he had stormed out the door that fateful night.

Kirishima was going to throw up.

"It's been a month," Katsuki said, slamming his hands down on the teachers desk.

"Yes it has," Aizawa said, not looking up from the papers he was grading.

"So why is this *fucking truth quirk still active*?!"

Aizawa sighed and turned to him, keeping his face blank. Kirishima wondered if that was deliberate. (There was no way he knew.

Kirishima was sure of it, now.) “I told you at the beginning of this that a month was the least amount of time it would last, even if it was the most likely amount. The quirk specialists said it could take as long as three.”

“You fucking *liar*!”

“Well, you were all the ones hit by the truth quirk, not me. I didn’t see a reason to worry you all.”

Bakugou just let off a string of curses so long it probably broke some sort of record. He then stormed right back out the door, but not before Aizawa called to him.

“And you better start showing up for class, unless you want your grades to start dropping even more.”

He didn’t respond, walking right out and slamming the door so hard it cracked.

Shoto wasn’t surprised when Bakugou finally came back to class the next Monday.

It wasn’t like he could avoid them forever. And yes, Shoto definitely understood wanting to hide when secrets such as theirs came out, but the blond cared too much about his grades to stay hidden away for the next two months.

Theirs.

The word still stuck out to him like a sore thumb.

Out of all the people in their class to share trauma with, Bakugou probably would've been his last guess. Which, he realized, was foolish in retrospect. So many of the signs were there: irrational anger, irritability, well-hidden anxiety, difficulty connecting with peers, internalized violent tendencies, a supposed superiority complex that probably masked an inferiority complex-

How close he had been to Shinsou during his panic attack, and how he had grabbed his arm when his truth was finally exposed. Or even . . .

When an adult hurts you, it's not okay. No matter their fucking motivation or whatever.

He shook his head. He couldn't afford to think about all this right now, or he might get emotional again, and he had had enough of that for a lifetime.

He knew his classmates were no better, especially Bakugou's "squad" of friends. They hardly ate, hardly slept, and most of their time was now spent camped outside Bakugou's room.

It wasn't even always to try and talk to him. Shoto had once walked by to see them all sitting around the door late at night, not saying a word. Almost as if they were afraid something would happen if they strayed too far.

Izuku wasn't faring much better, in any way, shape, or form. As his

closest friend and boyfriend, Shoto had taken the brunt of comforting Izuku through all his tears the past few days. Iida and Uraraka had helped him somewhat, but the girl was also distressed beyond belief and Iida was trying to help her the best he could at the same time.

And it was no secret how much of a mess Kirishima was.

So when Bakugou walked into class - not even thirty seconds until the bell rang - all movement and sound stopped. He didn't even look at anyone as he marched to his seat and angrily sat down.

Izuku, who sat right behind him, looked like had seen a ghost and was about to cry at the same time. He seemed to be the only one brave enough to speak, though. "H-hey, Kacchan!" he said with a forced light tone.

Bakugou took a deep breath, like he was trying to calm himself before accidentally biting the other's head off. "What do you want, nerd?"

"Oh, uh-" he looked down at his desk, like Bakugou had eyes on the back of his head and was mad at Izuku just for looking at him. "I just wanted to see if you were okay."

This would usually be where Bakugou exploded, or said something like, *of course I'm fucking okay, who do you think you're talking to?* or just straight up ignored him.

His voice was instead defeated as he spoke. "What do you think, Deku?"

Izuku looked like he was really going to start crying at that, but then

Aizawa walked in and class promptly began.

No one really paid attention to the lesson, though.

Despite all that was happening, Shoto trusted himself to not be shaken by whatever was going to happen. He was usually a very collected person, so he wasn't worried about what could occur. He honestly felt like he was prepared for anything, at this point.

"We're doing one-on-one quirkless sparring. Todoroki and Bakugou, you're up first."

Except for that.

He glanced over at the blond, who just glared at him before sharply looking away. He was slightly off to the side of the group, and when he heard his name get called a large scowl set itself across his face.

They wordlessly walked over to the middle of the ring and got in their fighting stances. Shoto braced himself, because he knew Bakugou wasn't going to be pulling any punches. He didn't on a normal day, but whenever he was mad about something he always had that much more steam to burn.

And he really had a lot to be mad about, didn't he?

Aizawa told them to start, and the blond immediately went in with a right hook, which Shoto dodged easily, but that was just the

beginning. He dodged a million and one attacks in just a few minutes, the stream of punches and swings never ceasing.

He wasn't sure how long it went on for before Bakugou was suddenly glaring at him even more intensely than he had before the start of the match.

"Stop *holding back*!" Bakugou yelled as he got in close.

Shoto hadn't realized it, but he *was* holding back, mainly sticking to dodges and other defense moves.

He went to apologize, to tell him he didn't mean it and that he was going to give his all now. That just because of his past he wasn't some fragile piece of glass.

"Was it your mom or you dad?" Shoto grunted between hits instead.

"My mom - *gah*! *Shut your mouth*!"

Now Bakugou looked *pissed*, but Shoto didn't stop for some god forsaken reason. "So your dad wasn't in the picture or what?"

"My dad never gave a shit," he spat. "He was always off doing who knows what - *Icy Hot*, I'm going to make you wish you were never *born*-"

He accented this with a large left hook that slammed into Shoto's stomach, making him sputter and cough for a moment which gave

Bakugou the chance to punch him hard enough to send him flying to the ground.

"I'm sorry they did that to you," he grunted out as he found his way back up and into a fighting stance.

"Sure you are," Bakugou hissed, going right for the kill again. They dodged around each other as the blond continued to growl at him. "Like you aren't happy your boyfriend's little bully got what he deserved."

"Of course not," he said with wide eyes, grunting as a fist hit his shoulder. "Why on earth would I think that?"

"Gee, let me *think*. Maybe it was you wanting to punch me ever since you found out, and now you know you don't have to anymore. I already know I'm a fucking villain, you don't have to spell it out for me."

"Bakugou," Shoto said, suddenly frozen in place, and therefore giving the other a chance to hit his gut and knock him down once more.

"What, are you gonna pity me too? Send me those stupid puppy dog eyes?"

"I think I understand you more than anyone else here," Shoto managed to say as he struggled upwards. "So no. I'm not going to pity you."

Bakugou let out a huff that almost sounded like laughter before going right back into his barrage of attacks. "Actually, I think mindfuck

understands me better than you ever will."

"Shinsou?" Shoto asked, bewildered. "I don't understand-"

"Because at least your father *liked you*!" he finally screamed, stopping his nonstop attacks and looking like something had snapped deep inside of him, his shoulders heaving and eyes dangerous. "Yeah, he might've been an absolute piece of *shit*, and you probably had it way worse than me, but at least he had half a mind to call you his goddamn *masterpiece*!"

Shoto wasn't sure what emotion was taking hold of him, but it felt a lot like dread. "Bakugou-"

"Oh, shut up!" he yelled, throwing another halfhearted punch that Shoto dodged easily. "My parents *hate me*! They've been saying I'm a villain for as long as I can remember! My mom fucking told me it was my fault I got kidnapped and threatened to *kick me out* because of it! I'm pretty sure the only reason she didn't was because of the goddamn dorms!"

He was practically seething at the mouth by now, and staring at Shoto with an expression so full of hate that it almost masked the unrelenting pain in his eyes.

"How's that for *understanding* me?" Bakugou spat when Shoto could only stand and stare at him. "Do you understand every single person wanting to chain you up no matter where you go?! Like fucking villains thinking you're one of them?! Or *heroes* when you only said *no*?! Or you own mother with *duct tape* over your fucking ankles and wrists because it's cheaper than quirk suppressors?!"

Shoto almost fell to the ground of his own volition, this time. He must

have looked like a fish out of water, because Bakugou nearly laughed, like every word he had said wasn't more of a punch to the gut than his actual hits. He then got in close, pointing a finger right at his chest. His words were quiet this time, but still sounded just as deadly.

"Like I said, the brainwashing bastard has more in common with me than you ever will, even if it's only because of the goddamn things shoved over our mouths."

He suddenly jolted in what appeared to be fear.

He then turned to everyone else, obviously playing off that he had forgotten they were there. "Mind you own *fucking* business, extras!"

He then shot out of the room, leaving Shoto to do nothing but truly fall to the floor. He got a weird sense of deja-vu from when the hero killer finally stopped moving all those months ago. The pure horror and shock filling every inch of his system, as if he couldn't move if his life depended on it.

"Does anyone care to explain?" Aizawa said, a dark edge to his voice none of them had ever heard before.

Shoto had a feeling they were going to be there for a while. They did have the whole period left, after all.

He heard someone run to a trash can and throw up. He glanced over and saw that it was Kirishima.

There was one class left after hero training that day, and Kirishima absolutely did not want to go to it. What did he need art history for anyway? What purpose did it serve other than to keep him from going to Katsuki?

(Why didn't he just run and follow him out the gym doors? Was it because he was *frozen* like a coward again, just like he always was? Or was it the nausea from all the things he said that caused him to spew up his lunch?)

(Or was he just terrified of what he would find out if he did follow?)

But he didn't want his rapidly dropping grades to suffer even more, so he sucked it up and went to class. He knew Katsuki wouldn't have let him talk to him either way, as upset as he was to admit it. He thought that he at least deserved *something* - some form of acknowledgment, some form of *I still care about you*. His bitter thoughts ran rampant for a few moments before he squashed them down into the dirt.

Because he knew that wasn't fair. Of *course* it wasn't. If Kirishima wanted to cry just thinking about what Katsuki had said, he couldn't imagine how he felt every moment of every day. Seeing his unkept form and dead eyes was heart wrenching enough on its own, and throw the whole emotional bullshit thing Midoriya had told them about, and a nasty picture was painted of how he must've been feeling.

Katsuki didn't owe anyone anything. This quirk took away his freedom to choose what to say, and it was no one's fault that the fallout was so horrendous.

The words he had screamed at Todoroki kept repeating in his mind like a broken record. Over and over and over again, he heard the words just like had been hearing his initial confession, over and over

and over and *over*. Like he was still screaming it right in front of his face, clear as day.

(He was never going to look at closets the same way ever again, that was for sure. Or duct tape.)

(He could still taste the bile in his mouth from the aftermath of that particular truth bomb.)

Midnight began class, just as usual, like nothing was amiss. He wanted to scream at her too, that they shouldn't be wasting time with all this stuff, when Katsuki was-

When Katsuki was . . .

Wait a *fucking minute*.

"Kirishima, what are you doing?" he heard Midnight say through all the fog in his brain.

Oh, he was standing up.

Good.

"You hurt him." His voice was quiet, yet still so much darker than it normally was. He didn't care. "You - you *did that to him*-"

"I did what?" she asked, clearly confused.

“The sports festival,” he spat. “You fucking muzzled him, and - and *chained him up*-“

He barely registered the sharp intakes of breath from the rest of the class as they realized. He could barely hear over the blood pounding in his ears as he stared at the teacher that simply looked on impassively.

“I only did what was necessary,” she said, unimpressed. “He wasn’t cooperating-“

“Oh, fuck you!” And that was Shinsou, who was now on his feet, too. “Do you even understand how wrong that was?! How horrible it was to see that heroes had no problem muzzling a *student* for *no reason*-“

“He wasn’t going to accept the award, which was mandatory-“

“So you just chained him up instead?” Kirishima snapped. “And didn’t think that his wild thrashing was some sort of goddamn *panic attack*?!”

“We had no reason to believe so, no.” She pushed her glasses up on her face like this was just a talk about the weather. “There was nothing we knew of that could cause such a reaction.”

“Even though the fact that he had been attacked by a villain that restrained him like that was already on his record?” Midoriya asked, a haunted look in his eyes - and Kirishima remembered that he had been attacked, too. He was glaring at his desk, like if he looked at it hard enough it would give him the answers as to why all this was happening. “Something the teachers should’ve been made aware of?”

Midnight had the decency to look slightly guilty for a moment, but then just looked annoyed. “Young man-“

“Oh, shut your mouth!” Kirishima yelled. “How could you *do* that to him, why would-“ he gripped his desk hard as defeat suddenly crashed over him. “Why am I just *standing* here?”

He grabbed his backpack shakily and began to storm out of the room. He ignored Midnight as she told him to stay - in fact, he only began walking faster. Pretty soon, he was running.

“Katsuki!” he yelled as he pounded on the door for what felt like the millionth time. “Open the door!”

No response. He heard him breathing through their wall, so he *knew* he was in there, but still nothing.

He tried again.

And again and again and again-

“Damn it!” he finally yelled, slamming his fists against the door and leaving them there in frustration. “I can’t - I can’t *do this* anymore, Kats! I care about you *so much*, and I just need-“

He choked on a lump in his throat, and belated realized he was crying.

He rested his forehead on the door and watched as his tears hit the carpet. His voice came out as barely a whisper. “I need to know you’re okay.”

He didn’t hear anything.

His fists began to slide down the door. “I need you here, okay? And I know that’s stupid, that I need you when *you’re* the one hurting, but I just can’t stand seeing you like this. *Please*.”

Nothing.

He stepped back slowly, blinking dazedly as he finally hit the wall and began to slide down, down, down. He found himself sitting, staring at the door, like he if he looked at it hard enough it would open. Like it would open just for him.

He wasn’t sure how long he sat there. He felt like he was dying, which again was *ridiculous* because he wasn’t the one suffering, but he felt like it nonetheless. He felt like his heart was being ripped from his chest and he could do nothing to stop it.

“I’m sorry,” he choked out eventually, still staring at the closed door. “About what everyone was saying, that night. And that I didn’t defend you. I was just - I was scared, and-and *frozen*, just like I *always am*-“

Was he crying still? “I want to be there for you now. And I’m sorry I’ve been too much of a coward to break your door down or climb through your window or some other completely ridiculous idea. But I don’t-“ he felt a sob begin to build in his throat before pushing it down. “I don’t think you would’ve appreciated that.”

He almost laughed at his own joke. And somehow, the little twitch of his lips upwards made everything else inside him come crashing down.

What do I do, what do I do, what do I do, what should I do-

He had absolutely no idea.

He had no clue how to make this better. He had no idea how to help.

Some *hero* he was.

(He didn't think he'd ever cried so hard in his life. He was trembling from head to toe, and he had to physically stop himself from vomiting up whatever was left in his stomach.)

His sight was completely obscured by tears, and even then, he had his face in his arm resting on his knees, just trying to shut himself out from the world as he cried his eyes out and clutched at his chest because it just hurt that much. He felt sobs rip through his throat like knives, and they stung, but it was nothing compared to the overwhelming agony of his heart shattering into a million pieces.

That's why he didn't see or hear the door open.

He only knew when strong arms suddenly wrapped around him.

He should've frozen. He should've said something - said something meaningful or beautiful or just a plain old *thank you*. He should've

stopped crying and comforted his boyfriend like he had been wanting to for so long. Like he had been begging to.

But no, he didn't do that. He just latched onto him and cried even harder.

"I'm alright, see? *Fuck*-" Katsuki shook his head like he was clearing it, before speaking softer than Kirishima had ever heard before. "It's gonna be fine. I'm right here, okay? I'm right here."

This would've been a good time to comfort him. To switch their roles. Instead, Kirishima just buried his face in his neck and tried his best to steady his shaking. "Okay," he whispered, barely audible over his own sobs.

And then Katsuki sat there as Kirishima clung to him. He didn't protest, didn't say *okay, that's enough, get off*. Didn't complain about the tears soaking through his shirt or how much it must've hurt when Kirishima held him as tight as he possibly could. He even ran his fingers through his hair awkwardly, like he was doing his best to be affectionate when he had never really learned how.

(And that thought was like rubbing salt on an already burning wound.)

"Sorry I'm such a mess," Kirishima finally said, leaning back to rub at his eyes. "I mean, you're the one that's hurting, and here I am like *this*-"

"But you *are* hurting," Katsuki said, like it was the most obvious thing in the world. "*I* hurt you."

Kirishima looked up to see him looking away, eyes full of what looked like guilt and regret. “You were just trying to protect yourself,” he said with a halfhearted shrug. “I’m not mad. It just hurt to know I couldn’t help you.”

“And you say you won’t be a good hero,” Katsuki said with a little smirk. “But no.” The smile slipped from his face like it had never even been there. “You’re too forgiving, okay? What I did was stupid and selfish.”

“I think you had the right to be selfish. Even if it was for just a little bit.”

Katsuki suspiciously wiped at his eyes before scowling. He sat up and turned so he could sit right next to Kirishima and glare at the door, too. “Whatever.”

Kirishima tilted his head slightly, like he could get a new angle on the problem if he just looked at it all differently. “I still love you.” He felt like he needed to say it. Not for himself, but because he had a feeling the boy in front of him might’ve been doubting it. “I don’t think you’re weak. You could’ve stayed in there for another month and I wouldn’t have been mad. I’d have still loved you then, too.”

“I love you too, but can we talk about something else?” Katsuki breathed. “I can’t do this right now.”

Kirishima’s heart sank a little lower than it already was. “‘Course. What do you wanna talk about?”

“Have you guys, uh-“ he huffed lightly and ran his fingers through his hair. “You guys watch any good movies lately?”

Kirishima smiled sadly to himself. “No. We haven’t had a movie night since . . .”

“Well that’s fucking dumb.” He turned to see the boy scowling at the ground. “Why wouldn’t you?”

“Because we were worried about you,” Kirishima said automatically. “We couldn’t bring ourselves to spend time together without you like that. We agreed to wait until you were ready to come back.”

“Well, that’s never gonna happen. You learn anything this past week worth my time?”

And so they sat there, talking idly and softly like nothing was amiss, like there wasn’t a heavy tension still in the air pressing down on them from all sides. Kirishima leaned over so their shoulders met and put his head on his shoulder. In response, Katsuki grabbed his hand and laced their fingers together, and held tightly. They still kept talking, but a bit of the tension drained out of them at the touch.

Maybe that was why Katsuki said what he did next, after Kirishima had accidentally let it slip how much everyone missed him.

“So . . . *if* I agreed to go to your stupid movie night, I pick who goes?”

Never gonna happen, huh?

He felt a shaky grin spread across his face. “Of course.”

“All our stupid friends can go.” Katsuki ran his fingers through his hair once more and huffed. “Yeah. That’s it.”

“That’s totally fine,” he said quickly. “We won’t have anyone there that you don’t want.”

“And no fucking cry circle.”

Kirishima turned his head slightly, confused as he stared up at the other’s face. “No what now?”

“Fucking cry circle,” he said again with a look of disgust. “That stupid thing everyone’s been doing where everybody sits in a circle and cries.”

“You mean, talking through our issues and supporting each other?” Kirishima said with a small smile. Of course he had come up with a silly little name for what they had been doing. Under all his bite, he was just a huge dork, no matter how hard he tried to deny it.

“Whatever, no emotions of any kind. And I am not a fucking *dork*.”

Kirishima couldn’t help but bark out a strangled laugh. He must’ve said some of that out loud. “Alright, alright. We’ll do our best.”

He clicked his tongue and turned away. “And no questions. I mean it.”

“Well,” he said, thinking about all their friends and how overwhelmingly worried they were, how much sleep they’d lost, how little they’d eaten- “We’ll do our best.”

As soon as he made sure Katsuki was okay, and that no, he wasn’t going to disappear back into his room the moment he left, and no, he wasn’t going to have a mental breakdown as soon as he left, either, Kirishima had run down to the common room, where everyone was just getting back from class, to tell them about the movie night.

They were all obviously relieved that Katsuki was finally talking to someone, and that he was willing to start spending time outside his room again. Many people were clearly upset they wouldn’t be able to go, but Kirishima knew that they understood it was for the best. They couldn’t overwhelm him, especially if they were going to follow his “no emotions” guideline.

Midoriya was by far the most upset to not be included, that was for sure. He could see that the boy was trying to be considerate of Katsuki’s wishes, but it was clearly hard for him. Kirishima could hardly blame him. He had known the blond the longest, yet had had no idea what had been going on behind closed doors the entire time. Knowing him, guilt was probably eating him alive, even if it wasn’t his fault in the slightest.

The Bakusquad, however, was ecstatic and near tears. Mina went off on a mission with Kaminari to pick out the best possible movies, and Shinsou, Jiro, and Sero all headed off to the kitchen to try and make something worthy of Katsuki Bakugou’s taste buds, and were probably failing miserably.

“Okay, so I have these for if he wants to watch horror, or these if he wants to watch a super hero movie-“

“What about this one? He loves classic All Might films.”

“No, guys, I think you’re supposed to add the eggs and *then* the flour-“

“Maybe we should just ask Sato for help.”

“Damn it, Shinsou, I am not admitting defeat here!”

Kirishima shook his head at his friends antics. Hopefully it would all be fine, and nothing would blow up in their faces. Hopefully nothing worse would come out of Katsuki’s mouth tonight - not because he didn’t want to feel worse, but because that would mean his past was just that much darker.

He and Katsuki came out of the elevator to see all of their friends standing in a circle, whispering amongst each other hurriedly.

Then they caught sight of the two of them and froze.

Kirishima looked between Katsuki and the group, feeling the tension slowly start to build. He waved awkwardly and forced himself to smile, hoping to dispel some of it. “Hey, guys!”

Nobody moved for a moment, and then-

“Blasty!” Mina yelled, running up to him with a shaky, yet genuine, smile. She suddenly stopped right as she reached him, though, like she was afraid to get closer. “Can I, uh, hug you?”

“You’ve never asked before, Raccoon Eyes,” Katsuki grumbled.

Her smile fell, and now there was nothing masking how much she probably wanted to cry. “I mean, uh - I guess - I’m sorry, I just don’t wanna make you uncomfortable-“

“Fucking hell,” he said with an eye roll. “Just treat me like you always do, moron. I said I don’t want any emotional bullshit.”

“Oh, uh, right.” She was still cautious as she approached him, like he might flinch away at the last second. The hug she eventually gave him wasn’t like their usual ones - it was typically her trying to be as obnoxious as possible while the blond complained the whole time. But now she wrapped her arms around him delicately yet tightly, and rested her head on his chest so the top of it was tucked beneath his chin. Katsuki patted her on the back awkwardly, like he wasn’t entirely sure of what to do - but he didn’t say anything about just how long she was hugging him, either. And for him, that really was a lot.

(Especially right now.)

Mina obviously knew that, too, so when she pulled back she offered him another shaky smile. “Thanks, Blasty.”

“Yeah, yeah,” he said, crossing his arms with a huff.

After that, everyone came up to him and said hi, skipping the “how

are you" formalities entirely, for obvious reasons. They began to chat like nothing was wrong, not unlike how Kirishima and Katsuki had been earlier.

Everyone, that was, except Sero.

Kirishima looked over at the tape-user, who was slightly off to the side of the group with a frown on his face. "You good, man?"

"Is no one gonna ask?"

They all immediately froze, most of all Katsuki. Kirishima sputtered for a moment. "Hey, we all agreed-"

"I'm not talking about that."

No one said a word, clearly at a loss as to what he *was* talking about.

Sero huffed. "Alright, *fine*. I'm just gonna say it. What was with not answering us? What the fuck were you *thinking*?" he yelled, clearly pissed off. "You had us all worried *sick*, man!"

Oh, so that's what this was about. Kirishima remembered how upset and regretful Katsuki had been for doing that, and went to say something to defend him-

"I thought it was only gonna be a few days," Katsuki said with a scowl. "I wanted to wait this damn thing out."

“And you thought we would just, what? Ignore you?” Sero said with a matching glare. “Not worry about if you were okay or taking care of yourself?”

“I was fucking fine, idiots.” He suddenly looked down and crossed his arms once more, like he wanted to make himself smaller. Which was so different than he normally was that it broke Kirishima’s heart all over again. “I thought you’d just, I don’t know. Let it go. Forget about it, if I was gone long enough.”

They all stared at him.

(Kirishima really needed to start some heart medication soon before there was nothing left. Maybe Aizawa could hook him up with something.)

“*Dude,*” Kaminari choked out after a moment. “Even *I* wouldn’t forget about something like that.”

That somehow got a small smile out of Katsuki. “Is someone gonna yell at him? Ears?”

“On it,” she said, obviously doing her best to lighten the mood. She promptly smacked him on the back of the head. “Love yourself, idiot.”

Kaminari laughed wetly as he rubbed where she had hit him. “Right. Sorry.”

“Let’s just watch some damn movies,” Katsuki said, obviously

desperate for the topic to change. Kirishima pointedly ignored the slight moisture in the blond's eyes he was harshly blinking away. "What'd you pick out?"

Katsuki felt like there were ants crawling all over his skin, and he wanted to rip it all off. There was a buzzing in his chest, too, like all the little bugs were pouring from his lungs like it was their hive. Or nest. Whatever.

He loved all his stupid, moronic friends (and they *were* morons, if their damn cooking earlier was anything to base it on). He really did. He didn't have to lie to himself anymore about that, because he found himself actually caring about others for once in his life.

(And maybe that just wasn't true. Once upon a time he cared about his parents, and his teachers, and the other kids on the block. He cared for Izuku, a long, long time ago, and was just now starting to again.)

(Because then *everything* had started, and didn't have *room* to care about anything anymore. Maybe now that he was away from it all he was starting to have room again.)

So yeah, he cared, as much as hated to admit it out loud. Not that this stupid quirk cared about what he wanted, so now they all knew he cared, too. Disgusting.

But now, because he cared, they all wanted to *help* him. They wanted him to *talk* to them. To let them support him.

And he didn't think he knew how to let them.

He wasn't an open person. He wasn't like Izuku, who wore his heart on his sleeve, or Kirishima, who always showed that he cared for others in the best possible ways. He was an asshole, a few steps away from becoming a villain. And yeah, Aizawa said he wasn't one, and his mother said he was, and he absolutely wanted to throw every word that hag said in one ear and out the other, and pretty much did everything in his life to spite her-

But why else would the league take him, the little traitorous part of his brain said? Why else would the school chain him up? Why else would All Might be powerless, now?

You think you can be a hero, brat? You'll just slip through the cracks just like every other low life that ends up in fucking jail. You'll be lucky if UA doesn't expel you one week into the semester.

Shut the fuck up, he told the hag in his brain.

Whatever. Damn it all. Why was he even thinking about all this again? He didn't fucking care what she thought. He *didn't*. It was all utter bullshit. He needed to get his shit together and focus on the action movie they had put on just for him. Because they *cared* about him, for some unknown reason.

(Why they would ever care about him, he would never know. Why they would forgive him for what he had done, he wouldn't either. He was just a ticking time bomb, waiting to explode in everyone's faces when they got too close.)

They weren't even halfway through the movie when he felt Mina slump over onto his shoulder.

He looked down at her, and saw she was drooling slightly on his shirt. He took notice again of the massive bags under her eyes - almost as bad as Shinsou's normally were. Even in sleep, her eyebrows were knit together like she was moderately displeased with something.

"She hasn't been sleeping," Kaminari whispered, looking down and fidgeting slightly with the pink hand by his lap. "Her nightmares have been getting worse."

And fuck, that was his fault, wasn't it?

It didn't take a genius to work out that they must've been getting worse because of what he said. And now that he realized it, Kaminari had bags under his eyes, too. Everyone did.

"Have *you* been sleeping?" he asked, because he needed to deflect. Then he realized that was a terrible deflecting statement. Stupid truth quirk-

"No. I've been too worried about you." Kaminari suddenly jolted, and he even woke Mina up in the process. "No, I mean - well, I haven't been, but I didn't really sleep when I found out about Shinsou or Todoroki, either-"

"Kami?" Mina muttered into Katsuki's shirt, still half asleep. "What-"

"Oh, shit, uh-" Kaminari looked downright panicked now. "I'm so sorry, go back to sleep-"

“You need to sleep,” she said through a long, drawn out yawn. “That’s not healthy.”

“You both need sleep,” Katsuki muttered. “I don’t want you having nightmares because of me.”

“What?” Mina asked, suddenly more awake. “Why would you think that?”

“The timing,” he said, and damn it, *shut up, shut up, shut up*- “You said your nightmares were about you not being able to do anything while people got hurt.”

Mina fully lifted her head to stare at him, open mouthed. “You remembered that?”

“It’s not my fault none of you can remember shit,” he said defensively. Fuck, he wasn’t supposed to care this much. This was getting emotional, and he couldn’t handle it.

How weak of him.

“If you extras say one word to me about trauma or my mental health, I will go back in my room for another fucking week.”

Kaminari, who had his mouth open, snapped it shut faster than was probably humanly possible. Katsuki ignored the sinking feeling in his chest when the other blond turned back to the movie, and when Mina did as well. He didn’t want them to ask him anything. *At all.*

He was relieved.

So why was part of him . . . *disappointed*?

(Was it because everyone else in his life had ignored his problems for as long as he could remember, and now he was just forcing them to do the same? Was it so horrible, he wondered, to get help? To have feelings that weren't rage or indifference or despair?)

(Was it so horrible to not be strong for once?)

(Because he *had* to be strong. He had to prove everyone wrong, prove *her* wrong, that he *could* do it, he wasn't a fucking *villain* of all things. Just because he was rude and loud to everyone he didn't understand the motivations of, did that make him irredeemable? Was not knowing who was on his side because everyone seemed to always be against him such a heinous crime?)

"Hey, be nice," Kirishima muttered on his other side, ripping Katsuki from his thoughts. "They just want you to know it's not your fault."

"Whatever, Shitty Hair," he said. And then, completely and totally *fucking against his will*, he would claim that to his grave, because there was absolutely *no way* he wanted to say this shit- "Does it help?"

His voice was so quiet - and wow, was it weird being quiet, he had been trying his best to do that recently after a particularly annoying chapter in that stupid fucking book Aizawa gave him - that he would be surprised if Kirishima even heard him at all. But he did.

"Does what help?" he said somewhat absentmindedly, still watching

the movie.

“Talking. About your shitty feelings.”

He felt Kirishima freeze more than he saw it. He was vaguely aware of everyone else freezing, too.

Screw this emotional bullshit.

“Yeah,” the redhead said breathlessly. “It was like, like this *weight* got lifted off my chest. And I could finally breathe again.”

A weight, huh?

Katsuki could understand a weight on your chest. Sometimes it felt like he was carrying the entire goddamn world on his shoulders, and couldn’t drop any of it without it completely crushing him and everything he cared about in the process.

“You too, Mindfuck? Sparky?”

There was complete silence. It was as if everyone was holding their breaths, like they were afraid to set him off.

“I think talking with Aizawa helped me the most,” Shinsou said quietly. Katsuki looked over and didn’t know *what* to think of the tears in the forever-bored boy’s eyes. “But telling everyone really did help with that weight Kirishima’s talking about.”

“I’d say so, too,” Kaminari whispered so softly you would think Mina was still asleep. “I figured out how much you guys actually like me. A miracle, if you ask me.”

Katsuki felt his lip twitch. “Moron. Love yourself.”

“You’re kinda sending mixed messages here, man.”

“Fuck you.”

“You can talk to us, Blasty,” Mina said with a suspicious sniff. And why he hadn’t stopped her from day one with that ridiculous nickname of hers, he had no idea. He very pointedly ignored the twinge in heart at the word, though. “We really do love you, you know.”

(Did he, though?)

(God damn it. Motherfucker. Motherfucking son of a *bitch*, he wasn’t actually *considering this*-)

“You’re the strongest person I know,” Jiro said. And damn, he hadn’t made this many people cry since middle school. “Nothing you could say is gonna change that. If anything it’s gonna make me think you’re even stronger.”

He let out another long, drawn out string of curses in his head, or maybe even out loud, he wasn’t sure. All he knew was that he should stop, this was just going to get him hurt, he couldn’t let himself

remember all the shitty things that had happened to him, all the shitty things he had *done*-

"You hold us all together, man," Sero said. "There's a reason we're called the Bakusquad. We're not gonna abandon you when you need us most."

Kirishima put a hand on his arm. Katsuki suddenly realized he had put his head in his hands at some point. "We love you. *I* love you. No matter what you chose to say or not say."

The string of curses was getting increasing longer and more convoluted.

He knew he was saying them out loud now, at least under his breath. He felt moisture hit his hands, and oh *fuck* no, like *hell* he was crying after all this time-

He shot out of his seat like he had been burned, most likely scaring Kirishima and Mina half to death on his way up, but he didn't care, because he had to *move*, because he was certain that if he sat still for one more second he was going to lose it.

He began to pace back in forth in front of the TV, which was still playing, oddly enough. And as he did, he ignored the stares that practically drilled into the side of his head.

Fucking hell. He couldn't fucking *do this*. He couldn't turn against everything he had ever known just for this pack of idiots, could he? There was no way in hell this would make him "feel better" and all that other sappy crap. If anything, he agreed with Uraraka. He deserved to suffer. He didn't care how much it hurt his pride to admit it, but he had known it all along, deep down. He was the only one that

agreed with her. The only one that saw the truth in her words. Why the hell should they forgive him for what he had done? Why should they treat him like some sort of friend?

But then he looked over and saw them all, just sitting there. Quietly. When he knew for a damn fact that this truth quirk must've been working on overdrive in them. They were fighting it, just for him.

Because they *cared*.

And deep down, he trusted them in a way he didn't trust nearly anyone else.

(The child in him was still there, deep down.)

(*Help me. Save me.*)

Damn it.

Damn all their fucking love and support.

Damn it all to hell.

"*Fuck*," he spat with an air of finality at the end of his rapid-fire curse pacing, stopping in front of the TV and ripping the chord from the wall, because he was an extra bitch, and he very well couldn't punch a hole through the screen without pissing the entire class off. "Fucking fine. Just-" he groaned in frustration as he sat down across from them on the stupid coffee table and put his face in his hands. "Fucking *fine*."

". . . Fine, like-"

"I'll do the fucking *cry circle*." He gripped tightly at his hair, and this was so *stupid*, he didn't need to do *any* of this- "But no actual crying. And if I'm going to do this shit I need a few more people here."

He heard nothing. He looked up and wasn't surprised in the slightest to see them all staring at him with eyes as wide as the fucking sun itself.

"Y-yeah, sure man," Kaminari said, standing up shakily with Mina. "Who do you want us to get?"

Yep.

Katsuki was going to regret this.

And that was because not even a few moments after Kaminari had left, Izuku Midoriya in all his teary-eyed glory came shooting out of the elevator at record speeds.

"Kacchan, are you okay? Kaminari just said you were asking for me, and I knew that was absolutely *crazy* but it's not like he could lie about it, right, so I knew something completely wrong must be happening or that some sort of emergency was going on, or-"

"Deku, for once in your life. Shut your damn mouth."

Izuku suddenly froze, as if noticing that no one was hurt or bleeding out on the floor. “Wait, what’s going on?”

“Katsuki’s gonna talk to us,” Kirishima said. They were the first words he had said since he had made that decision, and his voice was tight, yet somehow happier than he had heard it in a long time. “And he wanted you here.”

“Well, when you put it like that, I just sound needy.”

“*Kacchan*?” Izuku looked downright dumbfounded, and if anything it made him feel guilty. He was the reason the nerd had such a hard time with self esteem, and thought he hated him.

“Just. Sit down, Deku,” he said through teeth he was grinding so hard he was probably filing them down.

Mina came out of the stairwell entrance not a moment later with stupid Icy Hot right behind her, and behind him-

“Hey, I didn’t say to bring fucking Round Face!”

The girl in question flinched back at his words before becoming surprisingly sturdy. She stood her ground and looked him right in the eye as she spoke. “I know, I was with Todoroki. I wanted to come talk to you myself. I can leave if you want me to.”

So that meant Mina had given them more explanation than Kaminari had. Which made sense - the nerd had probably started chewing the blond’s ear off as soon as he opened the door.

He looked at the girl that he agreed with, that he knew was so much stronger than people gave her credit for, who had almost beaten him during the sports festival. He respected her enough, at least, to hear what she had to say.

"Is that everyone, Blasty?" Mina asked, slightly out of breath from taking the stairs. She had insisted, though, because it would be "faster" than waiting for Kaminari to get on and off the different floors.

They really were his morons, weren't they?

"Yeah. That's everyone." He glanced up at the two plus one he had specifically asked for, because he if was going to do this, he was going to do this right. Because he was Bakugou Katsuki, and he didn't half ass things. "Round Face, you can stay if you want. You can all sit down or whatever."

(He hated this truth quirk. It made him sound so *civil*. It also made literally everyone sound robotic, like Iida had possessed them all or some shit.)

They made no move to do so for a moment, though, even Izuku, who he had already told to sit down. They were too busy staring at him like he was their newest lab rat.

"Or just stand there like a bunch of idiots. I don't really care."

They finally moved then, coming to awkwardly sit on the couches. Of course the nerd sat by his boyfriend with the gravity girl on his other side, because they were all fucking nice to each other and tight knit

and accepting. How tooth-rottingly sweet.

Then he realized they were all staring at him, where he had moved to sit with his legs crossed in the middle of the coffee table like he was the center of attention. Like they expected him to talk. Because he said he would, didn't he?

Fuck.

"I don't know what I'm doing," he said through gritted teeth, because he really didn't. This was all so new and ridiculous. "Everyone else just cried like babies or whatever and that was it. I'm not doing that shit, and I don't want anyone *hugging* me either, but I know you all want me to talk or whatever."

"Katsuki, you don't have to say anything you don't want to," Kirishima said, like that was really true.

"Have you been living under a rock for the past month?" Katsuki deadpanned.

"You know what I mean."

"Tch." He scowled and looked back at the ground, knowing exactly what he meant, because these stupid extras cared about him and wanted to make sure he didn't forget it. And because of the stupid truth quirk he couldn't brush them off or tell them he suddenly hated them to get them off his back.

"So," Jiro said, clearly at a loss as to what to say. Katsuki was glad he wasn't the only hopeless one here. "Are you okay with . . . questions?"

“Whatever, I guess,” he said, and *what*?! Didn’t he *not* want them to ask questions? Oh for fuck’s sake- “If you want to.”

The rest of them seemed just as shocked by his words as he did. That was one of his biggest problems with this stupid movie night, as he had said: them being able to ask him questions. It was why he had hid in his room all week, why he had tried so hard to hide the truth in the first place, why he was hiding his face now-

(Maybe he was just sick of hiding. Sick of holding the fucking weight of the world.)

“May I ask a question?” Todoroki asked, blank as ever.

(And okay. He could handle this one, right? After all, if there was anyone here that wasn’t going to pity him, it would be him and Shinsou.)

“I just said you could, Icy Hot.”

“Why am I here?” he asked, surprising him. “I understand why you would want Izuku here, but you said so yourself. I don’t understand you.”

Katsuki couldn’t help but internally wince at his words. Damn it, just jumping right into the hard stuff right off the bat. “Yeah, about that.”

They all were still looking at him with such patient eyes, like he was worthy of their time and effort. “I wanted to . . .” And wow, how

much of an *asshole* was he that he couldn't get the words out with a literal truth quirk forcing his mouth open? "I wanted to fucking apologize, or whatever."

That actually made the boy's usually stoic eyes widen slightly. "For what?"

For what? There were a million and one things he could apologize for, so many ways he had fucked up throughout his life-

"For saying all that stuff I did." And for once, he was almost grateful for the quirk, because there was no way he would be able to say all this without it, and he needed to. "I shouldn't have compared us. And just because the bastard liked you or whatever doesn't make what you went through any better."

Todoroki tilted his head, like he was considering his words. "Thank you for your apology, but I don't think you were all that wrong. If he had hated me it probably would've been worse, at least when it came to his temper."

"That's not-" Katsuki internally groaned. Why couldn't they just admit he had fucked up? "I'm not saying it matters how good or bad you had it. I shouldn't have said anything at all, even if we weren't all that similar."

And why, oh *why*, did he have to tack *that* onto the end of his sentence-

"It's okay," Todoroki said, shrugging. "I pushed you, and I hadn't wanted to do that either. We both had our mouths forced open." He suddenly looked at him sadly, but there was no trace of pity in his eyes. "And we're more similar than you think. My father never locked

me in a closet, but he did once lock me in the training room and told me he wouldn't let me out until I passed out from exhaustion."

Katsuki was not ready for the gut-wrenching emotions that came with *that* particular sentence, but he spoke against his will - "How long did that take?"

"Around two days? I can't remember. He wouldn't let me sleep - he said it had to be me actually passing out. How long were you in the closet, three days?"

"Yeah, about that long. That's how many days I was suspended for." And maybe stupid Icy Hot's honesty just made him weaker against this quirk, like he wasn't as scared to be vulnerable anymore. "My mom put the duct tape over my hands and stuff so I couldn't just blast my way out without hurting myself more than she had already hurt me."

Fucking son of a *bitch*.

He felt horror start to creep into his veins as he realized everything he had just said. This was the end of his dignity, that was for sure-

"Yeah, my dad put metal over the door so I couldn't burn my way out, even if I wasn't using my fire at that point. He only ever did that once, so it wasn't too bad."

Okay, so maybe it wasn't that bad. If Todoroki was still respected for all of that, they couldn't think he was *that* weak, right? "It was only a few times she did that for me. It was whenever I was being "too much of a brat" or whatever. The first time was when I broke Deku's arm, though. That was the longest."

“Did they even feed you guys?” Kirishima suddenly asked with a small voice. Katsuki had been avoiding looking at him, so he almost flinched when he saw the tears rolling down his boyfriends face.

(And damn it, how bad of a boyfriend was he that he was making him cry so fucking much?)

“He let me have water,” Todoroki said. “So I could go on for longer. I almost didn’t drink it, I wanted out of there so bad.”

Silence met his statement, and Katsuki realized they were all waiting for his answer, and once he did he couldn’t stop himself.

“She didn’t give me anything.” He felt like his muscle fibers were going to snap from how tense they were. He could almost feel the phantom hunger pains from all those years ago. “When she let me out I almost passed out from dehydration when I finally stood back up. And the head injury I had aggravated by smashing it into the door about a hundred times.”

He was absolutely not going to lift his head ever again. He was going to crawl into a hole and die, and why the *hell* did he agree to this, this wasn’t making this better, it was just making him want to rip all his hair out-

But he had to do this. At least, he had to do one thing. One thing he had known he would have to do for so long, and had never had the strength to do, because he was a goddamn weakling. And maybe with this stupid quirk he could finally do it.

But not yet, because he was currently trying to keep himself from blowing them all to kingdom come.

“Is that when she used the tape?” Shinsou asked, and Katsuki was once again reminded of how freakishly horrid his childhood had been, and how eerily similar it was to his own.

“Yeah.” He could do this for Shinsou, right? Give him some solidarity like it was over their favorite colors and not fucking traumatic experiences. “It wasn’t as bad as like, a muzzle, though. So.”

“But you *were* muzzled, remember?” Shinsou said, a dark edge creeping into his voice. “By the people that were supposed to protect us.”

Oh yeah, he had screamed about that earlier, hadn’t he? “Yeah. That was a whole clusterfuck of triggers, wasn’t it? Stupid fucking teachers.”

Why didn’t he just put a giant sign up above his head, listing all his weaknesses for the entire world to see-

“Oh, you should’ve seen Kirishima earlier,” Kaminari said, a shaky yet genuine grin forming on his face. “He went *off*.”

Katsuki’s head whipped around to look at his boyfriend. “He did what now?”

“Oh, it was amazing,” Mina said, eyes now shining with something other than tears. “He totally cursed Midnight out! And then stormed out of the room like a badass!”

“It wasn’t much,” Kirishima said, awkwardly rubbing the back of his neck. “I just got so angry.”

Katsuki stared at him. “I love you.”

The redhead looked surprised at his words for a moment before smiling softly at him. “I love you, too.”

“That’s about the love language I would expect from you two,” Sero said with a small laugh.

“I mean, she did almost kill me, so I think rage would be a damn good response.”

Everyone stared at him.

“What do you mean, *she almost killed you*?!” Izuku asked, voice high and panicked.

“I thought I told you all about that,” he said with a huff. “My sweat contains nitroglycerin, which lowers my blood pressure.”

No one said anything. Which was wonderful, since he just told them his *biggest physical weakness*-

“. . . so?” Kaminari said. “Why would that almost kill you?”

Oh. He forgot most people didn’t know everything about nitroglycerin

like he did, since it had been drilled into his brain by doctors ever since his quirk developed. “Fast-acting sedatives lower blood pressure, too, like Midnight’s quirk. Recovery Girl had yelled at her, I think, since it was in my file and all that shit, and it had dropped dangerously low. If it had gone any lower I’d probably be dead.”

He was staring at his nails, which were bitten down to the end, which had been a habit from childhood he had dropped but came back full force once he had been alone in his room with his thoughts. They were almost gone now, just like his dignity.

“Can I hug you?” Kirishima asked, voice so quiet he could hardly hear him. “I know you - you said you didn’t want anyone to, but I just-“ he paused to gain composure with a deep breath. “Can I just . . . hold you for a moment?”

Did he dare look up at him? No, he didn’t want any more guilt to hit him in the chest. He instead just nodded, hopefully conveying that yes, he could, and he almost even wanted him to.

He was half-expecting him to slam into him, but instead he was gentle, like Mina had been earlier. But he definitely held him tightly. Like he was making sure he was actually there and not six feet under.

“I’m right here, Ei,” he said under his breath as he timidly hugged him back. “I’m fine.”

He didn’t hug him for too long, because Kirishima was a damn angel that always knew when he was overwhelmed, and gave him probably what was the biggest smile he could at the moment before sitting back down.

(Which wasn’t really that big.)

Nobody really seemed to know what to say now that Katsuki had admitted to facing death, because apparently *that* was the last straw with them, of all things. Maybe he could use this to steer the conversation away from the pity fest that had been going on.

“Round Face. Why are you here.”

She jolted at his sudden flat question, like she had forgotten she had *asked* to be here. She looked down, like she was gathering all the different ways she was going to yell at him to the forefront of her brain.

“I’m sorry.”

Wait, what? “What?”

“I’m sorry,” she said again. Her face then immediately crumpled, like she had been only keeping her composure through sheer willpower. “I shouldn’t have-“

Her words broke off with a sob. She was grasping Izuku’s hand so tightly both of their circulations were getting cut off. He wanted to bolt right out the door when tears started to escape her eyes, like tiny waterfalls of guilt directed at his very soul.

“What the hell are you sorry for?”

“For saying all that stuff,” she said, clearly heavily crying now. And damn it, this is what he had wanted to *avoid*- “And I felt bad enough

about it before, but listening to you all talk about - about *everything*, I just-“ she buried her face in the nerds shirt. “I’m so, so *sorry*.”

“Why?”

And apparently, that was absolutely the wrong thing to say.

“What do you mean, *why*?” she asked, somehow even more distraught than before, which was just perfect. “I said so many horrible things, it wasn’t my place to say *any* of it, and I *never* should have said you had to *suffer*-“

“But you were right,” he said with a small shrug. Why didn’t she understand anymore? “I *did* so many horrible things. It’s not like the school was going to do anything, just like you said. I deserved it.”

No one said a word. He stared down at the table and tried not to feel too disappointed. This was the part where they realized he was a lost cause, that he was nothing more than a villain, that he was so weak for letting her do all that to him, for deserving it at all-

“*Katsuki Bakugou*, you look at me *right now*.”

His head practically snapped up to see Izuku staring at him with more intensity in his eyes than he had ever seen before.

(And wow, the nerd still knew how to pronounce his name. Small victories.)

“If you ever, *ever* say that about yourself again, I will personally *kick your ass* until you learn to forgive yourself. Do you understand me?”

“I mean, not really,” he said against his will.

And oh *great*, that just made Izuku start to cry again.

His mouth still continued without his permission. “I just let her do all that to me. Like some weakling.”

“You’re not a weakling,” Todoroki said. He was rubbing his now almost sobbing boyfriends back, because Katsuki just couldn’t interact with him without making him cry, now could he? “Was I weak for letting my father hurt me?”

“That’s different,” he said immediately. “He was the number two hero, for fuck’s sake. The hag was just some weak old lady I could’ve blasted to hell if I tried hard enough.”

“That’s not how abuse works, Bakugou,” Jiro said. She was twirling her earphone jacks between her fingers, clearly distraught and yet looking at him dead in the face. He tried to ignore her tears as she spoke. “You don’t fight back just because you become stronger than them. They make you have a fear response that you can’t control.”

(And fuck, that was the first time the word “abuse” had been used, wasn’t it? It made him feel disgusting, like he was *damaged*. Like he wasn’t whole.)

“But you don’t understand,” Katsuki said, trying to not sound like he was about to cry, because he *wasn’t*. “You don’t understand how awful

what I did was."

"Kacchan," Izuku said, suddenly more sturdy than he had been not ten seconds ago. "You weren't a - a *monster*. Sure, you were a bully, but so was everyone else. And you understand what you did was wrong, which is more than what they can say."

"And nobody deserves that," Mina said, arms wrapped around Kaminari's arm like it was bringing her comfort or something. "No matter what you did, you didn't deserve any of that."

They weren't getting it. How hard was it to put the pieces together? "You morons have it backwards."

"What do you mean?" Shinsou asked. He and Todoroki seemed to be almost as upset as the rest of them, which made no sense. "How are we backwards?"

God, this wasn't going at all like he had wanted. He wanted to make them understand, but he knew once he did everyone would hate him. What he did was so, *so* wrong. He knew it was wrong then, too, deep down. There was no excuse for it. But he was becoming weaker to this fucking quirk for no reason, so he wasn't able to stop himself from answering.

"The hag just made me so - so *angry*. All the time. And I couldn't take it out on her. I lied to you all, when I said it was just the adrenaline that I had nowhere to put."

Izuku was the first to understand, because of course he was.

“You took it out on *me*.”

His voice was small, and disbelieving. Like he couldn’t believe Katsuki would do something so horrible, so *disgusting* as to continue the cycle of abuse in such a way.

“I shouldn’t have,” he said, looking at the table and not at him, because he didn’t want to witness the end of all they had worked to rebuild together. “You were just - *right there*. Stupid fucking five year old me saw everyone else picking on you - *you*, this little quirkless thing I thought was *looking down* on me - and thought it would be okay. I wouldn’t get in trouble for it if no one else was.”

He almost laughed at how stupid he had been. “But then she found out. It got so much *worse*, and I just got that much *angrier*. And still took it - took it out on *you* because I didn’t-“ he was absolutely *horrified* when a sob began to build in his throat. He pushed it so far fucking down, where it would never see the light of day, resting his head in his hands and his elbows on his knees. “I didn’t know what else to *do*.”

He stared at the table so hard he wouldn’t have been surprised if it cracked open and the floor swallowed him whole. Now they all knew how much of a coward he was, how weak he had been. How much of a “hero” he really was.

He vaguely saw someone standing right in front of him. He almost expected them to hit him - to punch him straight across the face because of how shitty he had been all along.

He then saw them fall to their knees. He saw a blur of green, and belatedly realized there was stuff in his eyes obscuring his vision.

“Kacchan . . .” His voice was so soft, yet so obviously full of tears. “Do you . . . do you really hate yourself that much?”

“Yeah,” he practically choked out. “I’m fucking horrible, aren’t I?”

Izuku didn’t say anything. Instead, he reached up and grabbed Katsuki’s hand from his face and held it tightly. “No, you’re not. You were a victim, just like me.”

He tried to ignore just how hard he was squeezing his friend’s hand, desperately trying to hide how much his own was trembling. He hardly realized when a tear landed on both of their hands. He couldn’t tell whose it was. “That’s no fucking *excuse*-“

“It’s not. But it is a reason.”

His throat was closing in on itself, his vision was practically gone, his chest was burning, breathing was becoming harder and harder-

“I *forgive you*.”

(And maybe he should’ve seen this coming when he had agreed to do something he literally called “the cry circle” of all things. Because maybe everyone else wasn’t that much of a crybaby, if this was what it felt like.)

(They were five, and he was pushing him away. Over and over and over, he forced himself to not care about this pure light in his life that cared so damn much about him. He beat him down, crushed his heart, made a million and one mistakes. He was fifteen, learning that he could rely on other people. Learning that it was okay to not be strong,

sometimes. He was fifteen, learning that this light had considered ending his own life. Learning he really did care, so, *so* much. Learning that maybe everything wasn't his fault. Finding out that maybe it's never too late to rebuild something beautiful.)

"Can I hug you, Kacchan?"

The dam broke.

He practically fell off the table and into Izuku's arms, where he couldn't tell which one of them was shaking harder from their sobs. He hadn't hugged him since they were so damn *small*, and he had completely forgotten how amazing his hugs really were. They both were practically holding on for dear life as they shook on the ground, numb to rest of the world.

"I'm sorry," he was saying into Izuku's shoulder between his tears, eyes shut tightly like that would help it all go away. "I'm so, so *sorry*-"

Izuku had a hand in his hair, and was practically almost shushing him, which he would've literally murdered him for on any other day - or at least he told himself that.

"It's okay," he whispered. "It's *okay*. I love you *so much*."

And maybe it would be okay. After all, the nerd was telling the truth.

They'll hate you, the hag said in his mind. *They'll never love a bratty villain like you.*

He felt himself smile. He really did do everything out of spite, didn't he?

"Love you, too, Izuku."

Chapter End Notes

tw: implied/referenced child abuse, child neglect, vomiting, multiple references to restraining children/teenagers, muzzling children, panic attacks, self hatred, self-imposed victim blaming, referenced emotional/mental abuse

Bakugou, last chapter: if this quirk makes me say one more stupid thing I'm barricading myself in my room
Narrator voice: and then he did

I hope you all liked my take on the "Bakugou was abused" trope. I was low key nervous to post this just cause it's so dark lol. The headcanon that the sports festival wasn't the first time he was restrained like that hits me RIGHT in the gut, so of course I had to write it here. I'm really happy with how this chapter turned out, and I hope you didn't cry as much reading it as I did writing it :')

(Can u tell I'm mad about the sports festival tho)

I'd like to say thank you for all the love you guys have given me for this fic ❤ I really didn't expect it to get so big so fast. It's almost done now, and I've had a really great time writing this! There might be a slight wait for the last chapter, I'm not entirely done with it and I want to make sure I wrap everything up well. Please be patient but I promise it will be up soon!

Katsudon

Chapter Notes

tw in end notes

So sorry for the wait but it's here!! I hope you enjoy!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shota closed the door behind him and simply leaned against it for a moment, doing his best to take even breaths.

Hizashi was in the kitchen grading, just like he usually was when he got home - even if Shota was *several* hours later than he normally was, due to the fact that he had been in his office, trying not to break down as he stared at nothing for far too long.

After making sure he wouldn't fall to the floor as soon as he moved, he kicked off his shoes and trudged into the room. He then practically collapsed into the chair adjacent to his husband, who was still ever-focused on his laptop.

"Hey," he said absentmindedly, scrolling through what was probably an email. "How was your day?"

His mind flashed to his last class, where all his students had told him everything that had been revealed to them in the past week - everything that they had been *keeping* from him. He remembered Todoroki coming up and explaining all that they hadn't been able to hear.

He still heard Bakugou's screams echoing around his head, like a broken record, looping back over and over and over again.

“I fucked up.”

And maybe it was what he said, or maybe it was how quiet he said it. But he was pretty sure it was how broken he’d sounded.

Hizashi immediately looked away from his work. “What?”

“I fucked up,” he said again, putting his face in his hands. “So bad.”

“I’m sure it wasn’t that bad,” Hizashi said, completely pushing his computer and paperwork to the side and moving his chair to be right next to him. “What happened?”

What happened? Oh, where did he even start?

He wasn’t one to beat around the bush, though, and he wasn’t going to start now. “Bakugou is being heavily abused at home.”

He heard a sharp intake of breath and saw him physically flinch. It was several moments before he spoke. “Did you find out because of . . .”

“Because of the damn truth quirk?” he said, fully exasperated by the mere thought. Of course that would be the only reason he ever found out about anything, anymore. “Yeah. He accidentally spilled a lot during training today.”

“That’s. . .” Shota watched as he ran his fingers through his hair. “Yeah. That’s pretty bad. But how did you screw up?”

Shota almost put his head on the table as he remembered all that had happened. “Well, the kids all knew about it before today and didn’t tell me.”

“You couldn’t have known, babe,” Hizashi whispered, putting a hand on his shoulder. “How did they even keep it a secret?”

“Fuck if I know,” he muttered, and then actually put his head on the table like it would block out all his troubles.

“That’s still not you’re fault,” he said, rubbing his back.

He almost smiled at the irony of his statement. “No. What *was* my fault was not realizing why Bakugou hadn’t been showing up to class. And why he was so angry at me for not being honest about how long the quirk could’ve lasted.”

“I mean, that’s still not your fault,” his husband said, still on his side for some reason. “He could’ve been avoiding everyone for any number of reasons.”

And that’s what Shota had thought. No offense to the blond boy, but he could be a bit . . . *dramatic* when it came to sharing his feelings. And when Midoriya had come to him and shared his thoughts on how the quirk was truly affecting everyone - which Shota was sure was happening, the boy was an analytical genius - he knew Bakugou was probably having a very hard time with it all.

He had figured he had accidentally let some of his emotions slip, and had been too embarrassed to face anyone. Shota knew about all his harbored guilt over how he had been in middle school, and had

thought he had opened up to him about pretty much everything during their therapy sessions. After all, it was Bakugou who had originally come to *him* to ask for help in the first place, and Shota had been so proud of how much progress he had been making.

But apparently he didn't know anything. He hardly knew anything at all.

"I guess," he said with a shrug, sitting back up and rubbing his face with his hands. He wasn't particularly surprised when he felt himself brush away a tear. "But I could've done something sooner."

"Well, you can do something now," Hizashi said, ever the optimist. "Have you talked to him yet?"

"No. I'm planning on it, though." He shook his head and rested his chin in his hand. "Do you think . . . should we-"

There was a knock at the door.

Hizashi gave his shoulder a quick squeeze before letting go and heading over, knowing Shota was in no shape to do so.

He didn't pay much attention to who was at the door, knowing it was probably some security personnel or another teacher. He just sat at the table and tried to take even breaths.

That was before he heard a familiar voice. One that sounded heartbroken.

He looked up to see Hitoshi standing there, eyes red and puffy and hair more of an absolute mess than it usually was. “Shota?”

(It was a step up from Aizawa, at least. He had given him permission to call him that, hoping they could eventually work up to “Dad” one day.)

(He was disgustingly sappy like that.)

“Hey,” he said, trying to keep his voice steady. “You okay?”

Hizashi led their unofficial yet soon-to-be-official son inside, and they both sat down so that Hitoshi was between them. The boy practically collapsed into his chair like he didn’t have the energy left to stand.

“No,” he said, the truth quirk still ever-present in him. “I’m not okay at all.”

“What happened?” Shota asked, already having a pretty good idea.

“Bakugou decided to actually talk to us,” he said, surprising Shota immensely. Maybe their therapy sessions had been doing some good after all. “And everything he said was so horrible and sad and just-“ he put his head in his hands, like he was trying to hide the fact that he was still crying. “He said he *deserved* it. That he deserved to be starved for days while being restrained by his own parents. That he deserved to be in pain.”

Okay, so *maybe* they still had work to do in the therapy department.

“He was *what*?” Hizashi practically hissed, and Shota realized that he had never explained just how bad it had been.

“*I* didn’t deserve it, right?” Hitoshi suddenly said, looking up at Shota with wide eyes. “They were wrong to-“

“Of course it was wrong,” he said, probably a little too fiercely. He could tell the boy hadn’t wanted to say that out loud, but nonetheless comforted him with a hand on his shoulder. “In no way, shape, or form did you *ever* deserve what happened to you, and neither did Bakugou.”

Hitoshi wiped at his eyes before staring at the table once more. “Okay. Yeah, okay.”

Shota snuck a look over his head, making eye contact with Hizashi. He wasn’t too surprised to see unshed tears in his eyes. Out of the two of them, the blond had always been the more emotional one.

He also knew the other understood what he wanted to do, and that they needed to talk about it.

All three of them.

“Bakugou is still under the custody of his parents,” he said quietly, still rubbing his back. “We could do something about that.”

Hitoshi looked up at him, like he definitely knew where this was going, but didn’t acknowledge it regardless. “You could throw his parents in jail.”

He couldn't help but give a light snort at his words, and saw Hizashi smile, too. "We'll get to that later, just like I told you I'm going to burn that foster home to the ground."

Hitoshi smiled sadly. "But that's not what you meant, was it?"

"No." Shota gave him weak smile of his own. "But this is Bakugou's choice. And it's yours, too."

"Mine?" he asked, confused. "Why would it be mine?"

"Because you're a part of this family, too, now," Hizashi said softly, placing a gentle hand on his arm. "We wouldn't do something like this without talking to you."

He stared between them for a moment before looking down again and sniffing lightly. "How do I even make that choice?"

Shota hummed, considering his words. He decided to answer with a question of his own. "Do you want him out of there?"

"Yes," he said without any hesitation. "More than anything."

"Are you okay sharing us? With more than just Eri?"

"Yeah," he said with a shrug. "How could I deny someone this when I needed it so bad?"

(He really loved this boy - so, so much. How could anyone ever say he was a villain when he had such a selfless heart?)

“Do you think you could tolerate being in the same house as him all the time?” Hizashi asked jokingly.

“Yeah,” Hitoshi said with a weak laugh. “I guess I could.”

“He might not even want this,” Shota said, cutting down the mood like he was so good at doing. “I’m going to tell him he could be under official custody of UA, which would technically make me his guardian, just as his homeroom teacher, not a legal parent. Or he could decide to go into foster care.”

This made Hitoshi laugh in earnest. “I don’t think he’ll *ever* want to do that after all that I spilled.” But then the smile slipped from his face, and he looked at Shota with an almost pleading expression. “You just *can’t* let him go back there. No matter how stubborn he tries to be. You can’t - you *can’t let him*.”

He was crying again, and Shota tried to ignore the tears that gathered in his own eyes at the sight as he leaned over to hug him. He tucked his head under his chin and wrapped his arms around him tightly. “I won’t. I promise.”

“If he says yes, we’ll definitely need a bigger apartment,” Hizashi said mischievously, ever the mood-lightener of the house.

“Good,” Shota said. “I don’t need that mouse saying five people can live in a two bedroom place.” He suddenly pulled back and gave Hitoshi a questioning look. “There’s no one else that needs help,

right?”

His heart sank to the floor when the boy looked down sheepishly. “Well. . .”

Shota almost put his head on the table again. He had a feeling this was going to be a *long* night. “I need a drink. And a raise.”

Katsuki wasn’t really paying attention to the lesson. Which was stupid, because he always paid attention in class, but he just couldn’t force himself to. He wasn’t sure where his thoughts even were, anymore. It was like they were a jumbled up mess of emotional shit that was going to drive him insane.

Okay, what could he think of that *wouldn’t* make him dissolve into a panic attack in front of everyone?

He glanced across the room to look at Kirishima. He found himself smiling at the back of his head, like some love-sick puppy.

Gross.

(But at least his heart rate was down, now, the little traitorous romantic inside himself said.)

As if he could sense his gaze, Kirishima turned slightly and caught his eye. He looked surprised, like the sight of Katsuki smiling was a shock in and of itself, and smiled right back as bright as the sun before

turning back around.

And really, how did he get so lucky?

He remembered again how he had apparently stood up for him about what had happened during the sports festival. Midnight had been avoiding looking at him these past few days, which was damn amazing. A relief from the ever-burning resentment he had held over what had happened.

It wasn't just how it had affected his public image, or his internship experience. Or even his mental health, however fucked up it had been beforehand. No. It was because it had made home a fucking *nightmare* for *weeks* the moment he had stepped through the door with that damn first place metal buried deep in his backpack.

"Brat," she hissed, slapping him in the face so hard it brought tears to his eyes. "What was that fucking display?!"

"Nothing, you hag!" he yelled, trying to make his way around her so he could escape to his room like the coward he was-

"And where the fuck do you think you're going?!" she exclaimed, grabbing him and slamming him up against the wall. "I'm not done talking to you!"

"I just said no!" he said, trying to ignore how he was suddenly frozen. "Is that so fucking bad?!"

"It is when they want to tie you to a podium and you make a fool out of yourself! Maybe I should take a page from their book and strap you down again!"

He ignored the jolt of fear that went through him at those words. “You couldn’t pin me down if you tried!”

“Wanna fucking bet?!” she yelled, slamming a vase from a nearby table into the wall right were his shoulder would’ve been if he hadn’t wrenched himself out of her grip at the last second.

“I have school tomorrow, hag!” he yelled, lying through his teeth. “Don’t give me injuries I can’t explain!”

“Don’t you dare lie to me, I know you have off,” she said, but still backed away slightly, knowing he was right. She crossed her arms. “We’ll talk about this later. And clean up this mess,” she said, gesturing to the shards of glass now scattered all over the floor.

He didn’t dare move as she walked past. He knew what those words meant, and that this was far from over. She was probably just going to get drunk and be even worse later.

She was worse. He had to lay on his side that night, trying so hard to not think of the award at the back of his closet. At least she had left his face clear, since she had been entirely sober.

“Bakugou, please see me after class,” Aizawa said, jolting Katsuki out of his thoughts.

Oh, the lesson was over. Actually, the whole fucking day was over, wasn’t it? Great, he was now certifiably crazy. Thankfully he hadn’t freaked out on everyone. So much for thinking “happy thoughts” and all that shit, though.

He didn't bother moving from his seat, glaring at his desk as everyone walked past him. He knew they were all looking at him, but didn't budge. He didn't want their pity.

(And maybe they weren't even pitying him. Maybe they just . . . ugh, *cared*.)

(He really was losing it, wasn't he?)

He stayed like that until everyone was out of the classroom. Until it was just him and Aizawa. And wait-

He knew about all of it now, didn't he? *Fuck*. He hadn't even *thought* about that yet, about how Aizawa was in the room when he lost it with Todoroki. Which was . . . great.

Just *great*.

"What do you want?" he practically growled, still not looking up from his desk.

"Do you want to talk in my office?" Aizawa asked - and just *perfect*, he was talking all *soft* and *accommodating*- "Or we could stay here. It's up to you."

"Why do you care?" he couldn't help but ask. He wasn't sure if that was him being bitter or if it was just the truth quirk, but he still regretted the words as soon as they left his mouth.

Because Aizawa had been there for him through so much. He had helped him through all his shitty feelings to the point where he could almost believe everyone actually liked him and weren't just pitying him. It was because of his help his relationship with Izuku was better now.

He smirked lightly in his seat at the thought of the conversation they'd had that morning.

"So . . . do you want me to call you Izuku now?" he asked.

Surprisingly, the nerd made a face. "Ew, no. That'd be so weird. Like, I really appreciated it last night, but it still felt weird, you know?"

"I mean, I don't want to call you-"

"The name that means something new to me now? The hero name you *gave me?"*

He scowled at the ground. "It was still an insult."

"Yeah, well it's not anymore. I like it. And what, am I supposed to call you Katsuki *now?"*

He felt himself make a face. "Ew, no. That'd be so *weird." Izuku just gave him a deadpan look. "Ugh, fine. Whatever you say, Deku."*

His smile disappeared when he remembered where he was. Because his mind didn't know how to fucking work anymore, apparently.

He risked a glance up at Aizawa, and did a double take. He looked . . . really bad. Like he hadn't slept in a week and was about to start crying at the drop of a hat. Which was ridiculous, because Aizawa didn't *cry*.

(Katsuki didn't cry, either. And that had been proven wrong.)

He looked back down at his desk, biting his tongue. He would've liked to go to his office, to maybe make it feel like one of their therapy sessions, but that would make it harder to pretend to ignore him.

He was sure Aizawa was going to wait for him to say something. And that he was going to keep trying the kicked puppy approach. But he was their teacher, and curve balls were his specialty.

"I can have your parents in prison by the end of the month."

His head snapped up faster than it ever had in his life. "You can *what*?"

Aizawa looked as disinterested as usual now, like his distress earlier had never even existed. And Katsuki was grateful, because his head was spinning enough as it was. "You have been reportedly under the influence of an extremely powerful truth quirk. The entire conversation you had with Todoroki-" *conversation, yeah right-* "in the gym was recorded by our top of the line security system, not to mention it was in front of over a dozen witnesses. You wouldn't even need to give a statement, and as a pro hero I can fast-track the court process."

Okay.

Okay, that was a fucking lot to process.

“And they’d just what, go quietly?” he asked once the gears in his brain started turning again. “They wouldn’t make a big deal over the fact that a hero students parents were being arrested for child abuse?”

(That child. He was going to pound him and that quirk of his into the ground. Actually, no - he was going to find the parents of the kid and pound *them* into the ground for thinking that mixing their two quirks together would be a *grand* idea-)

“We would force them to sign nondisclosure agreements. They would be facing almost twice the jail time for leaking anything.”

“And how long would it be without leaking anything?”

(How long did they deserve in prison for hurting him, however deserving or undeserving he was? How much did they do in the eyes of the law? Was scarring him mentally and physically only worth a few years? Did the closet thing add a couple? Where was the line?)

“Felony charges of the sort can go above thirty years for your mother. It would be less for your father, since neglect was his only crime, but it would still be over five years, possibly even ten. The court will also place restraining orders on them so once they are out of prison they can’t go near you without facing more consequences.”

And that was even more to process.

It was weird, hearing what they did talked about it such a legal manner. Like . . . they actually broke the damn *law*, didn't they? It wasn't just him being a brat, no matter how much that was true.

And if this happened, he wouldn't have to see them ever again.

Did he want that?

A hand in his hair, shoving him into a closet. A shoe against his ribs. A father that only stopped by to do laundry. Glass in his skin, metal on his back. A fist in his face. Tears in the dark.

Yes.

Yes, he wanted that.

"But what if they were right?" he said. He couldn't stop the words from pouring out. "What if I deserved it?"

"You didn't." And his sad, kind voice was back. He glanced up to see he was standing in front of his desk now, like he wanted to get closer. "You never deserved any of that."

"You don't know that," he spat, looking back down. Because even if Aizawa knew a lot, he didn't know everything. He had made sure of that, because . . .

Because he wanted a parental figure that didn't hate his guts, for once in his life.

"Actually, I do. Hitoshi told me."

A flash of anger went through him. What *right* did he have, to tell him *anything*-

"He came to my apartment after you went to bed, clearly upset about everything that had happened. He told me he wanted you out of that house more than anything. His words, not mine."

Oh.

(More than *anything*? Even under a truth quirk, that was the thing he wanted most, now that his own troubles were solved?)

(Did he really care that much?)

"And I want you to know that you could've been the worst kid in the history of kids - you weren't, that's *not* what I'm implying - and you still wouldn't have deserved a single bit of what they did to you."

He harshly blinked back whatever damn moisture was brave enough to enter his eyes. His chest was burning intensely, just like it had the night before.

He was getting sick of this.

He glanced back up and saw that Aizawa was right at the side of his desk now, crouched down so they were at eye level with each other. “I need you to understand. You’re not a villain. You never were one, and you’ll never be one. I’m proud of how far you’ve come, and I know you’ll make a great hero, one that’s compassionate and strong.”

(So many people had called him strong.)

(No one had *ever* described him as compassionate before.)

He certainly didn’t feel strong right now, that was for sure. He felt like he was going to fucking fall apart at the seams.

Aizawa still cared about him, knowing everything he had done.

He didn’t want to admit how great it felt to know he was *proud* of him.

He couldn’t remember his parents ever being proud of him. He won the sports festival, and they didn’t care. He escaped villains with his life, and they just said he was one of them. He came in first for the entrance exam, and they just told him he would be expelled within the first week.

(He gets a quirk, they only hurt him.)

“Katsuki,” and wow, he was using his name, that opened up a whole

new *floodgate* of feelings- “Do you want out of there?”

“Yes,” he said immediately, not sure if it was against his will or not. Which was really annoying, if he thought too hard about it.

Aizawa hummed, like he was considering his words.

(Like he wasn’t just going to either shove him back to his parents or into a foster home. Which wouldn’t be too bad - he only had a few more years until he became an adult, and he was living in the dorms until then anyway. Whatever shitty home he would be shoved in for the summer wouldn’t be half as bad as anything he had already experienced.)

(Part of him was bitter. Bitter about the fact that *Shinso* got to be adopted by Aizawa and Mic - because of course he knew they were married, they weren’t subtle in the slightest - and that he was getting a better life.)

(God, *this* was why he was such an asshole. Shinso had been through literal *hell*, and all he could do was be jealous of him for being happy. Katsuki was the one that deserved to suffer, after all.)

(So why was he so upset?)

“You could become a ward of UA. It would make me your legal guardian, as your teacher. You would stay on campus over breaks and I would become your emergency contact.”

Katsuki’s heart stopped. There was no way; it was too good to be true. It was such a simple solution, one that didn’t leave him somewhere he

didn't want to be and let him live his life in peace.

(So why was he still upset? Why was he still jealous?)

(At least he didn't have to confront Aizawa about his feelings, now.)

"How would you feel about that, Katsuki?"

It sounds fucking fine. Let's do it and never talk about this again.

"I already see you as a father figure, so it'd work out well. I'm just jealous of what Shinso has, even if he never deserved to be hurt in the first place like me."

He immediately put his face in his hands and tried his best not to scream out an extensive list of choice words. He couldn't look Aizawa in the face ever again, and that was going to get really fucking complicated these next few years-

"Katsuki, what did I just say about all your parents did?" he asked, like it was the only problem he had with what Katsuki said.

"That I didn't deserve it," he grumbled into his hands, resisting the urge to also put his face on his desk. "I'm trying, okay?"

And well . . . shit. He *was*, wasn't he? He was trying so hard to believe everyone. He could almost see himself believing them, sometime in the distant future. Maybe with a lot more fucking counseling.

“I know you’re trying,” Aizawa said softly, putting a gentle hand on his shoulder. Katsuki lowered his hands slowly to look at him, and somehow wasn’t surprised to see a couple tear tracks on his face. “It just breaks my heart that someone I see as family thinks that of themselves.”

Someone he saw . . . as *family*?

Well, fuck.

So much for trying his best not to cry.

“We can be a family, if you want that.”

He hardly even felt himself nod, too focused on trying to stop the tears from pouring down his face. All he knew was *yes. Yes I absolutely want that.*

He found himself tightly gripping the hand Aizawa had on his shoulder, like that would ground him. His head was still spinning way too fucking fast. And maybe that was a good thing, so he wouldn’t be angry at himself for what he did next.

He hugged Aizawa like a goddamn child, and cried like one, too.

(He really needed to get his shit together, didn’t he?)

“You’re still, uh-“ he shoved a sob down his throat, trying to keep the last of his dignity from going down the drain. “You’re still gonna throw them in jail, right?”

Aizawa chuckled beneath him, and Katsuki definitely didn’t melt into him even more. “Absolutely.”

“And . . . what about Midnight?”

Because he *had* to ask, apparently.

He felt Aizawa almost growl below him. “Nezu said we’re already short staffed as it is. She’s on thin ice, though, I can assure you.”

He couldn’t help but bark out a weak laugh. “Thanks, Aizawa.”

He hummed. “Call me Shota, kid.”

Katsuki tried to wipe at his eyes the best he could before he left the building, because he knew all his shitty friends would be waiting for him right outside. And apparently his circle had grown a lot, since Izuku and his whole fucking entourage was there, too.

“Are you alright?!” Kirishima asked immediately, clearly seeing the redness around his eyes.

“I’m good,” he said quietly as he stared at nothing dazedly, head still

spinning faster than the planet itself. “I’m *really* good.”

“Oh,” Kirishima said, relieved yet clearly confused. “I’m glad?”

“Shinso,” he said for some reason, looking around before finding him somewhere to his left. “We’re brothers now, I guess.”

Because *that* was how he was going to break the news to everyone, apparently.

Shinso just smirked and looked at him knowingly. “I had a feeling. Did he threaten your parents, too?”

“Promised to have them in jail by next month.”

He gave a low, impressed whistle. “*Nice*.”

“Wait,” Kaminari said, like this was the most monumental news ever. “Does that mean. . .”

“He’s adopting me,” he said. Because it was. It really was the best news that had happened to him in a long, long time.

“That’s amazing, Kacchan!” Izuku said, bouncing up to him like a puppy or something. “I’m so happy for you!”

Katsuki knew he was smiling, and for once he didn’t try to fight it. “I’m happy, too.”

“Just promise you guys won’t kill each other,” Kaminari said, swinging an arm around Shinso’s shoulders. “That’d be rather unfortunate.”

“Are you alright?” Shoto asked Izuku, who was crouched in front of the gym doors, looking like he was about to cry.

“I don’t know,” he said as Shoto sat down next to him. “It’s just - everything that’s happened. There’s so much pain in the world. How are we ever supposed to fix it?”

Shoto hummed and looked down, trying his best to not crush his spirits. “I don’t think we can.” *So far, so good,* he thought bitterly. “But our job as heroes isn’t to fix all the worlds problems. It’s to help people. That’s why All Might was the Symbol of Peace, right?”

“I guess.” He sniffed lightly and wrung his hands together. “And how am I supposed to live up to that? How do I become a - a *symbol* when there’s so much wrong with the world? Am I even worthy of his power?”

Shoto placed a hand on his arm, and Izuku to looked up at him with teary eyes.

And he couldn’t help but smile as he recalled what had been said to him so long ago.

“It’s your power, isn’t it?”

Izuku looked taken aback for a moment before his face split into a the most blinding grin Shoto had ever seen. He tackled him in a hug and buried his face in his neck, like he was meant to be there.

Shoto wrapped his arms around him tightly, because he really didn't plan on ever letting go.

Denki was going to slam his face into the table.

"But why?" Mina asked, drawing out both words so that it was more of a groan.

Aizawa just rolled his eyes. "This isn't the end of the world. It's been over a month since you trained with anyone outside this class, and it hasn't been good for your education. Class B has been specifically instructed to not antagonize you."

"Like *that's* gonna happen," Jiro muttered. It was apparently close enough to the truth that she was able to say it.

Because yeah, that's exactly what didn't happen.

"Oh look!" Monoma exclaimed as soon as he saw them, striking one of his stupid poses. "It's the truth telling class! Oh, I hope nothing embarrassing about class 1-A comes to light! That would be truly unfortunate-"

He was hit over the head by Kendo, who just smiled at them apologetically. “Sorry ‘bout him!”

“I can still beat your ass, Copy Cat,” Bakugou said, almost sounding bored. “Don’t need to lie about that.”

Denki raised his hand for a high five and was absolutely *ecstatic* when the blond obliged.

Unfortunately, his luck ran out, because he was grouped with the lunatic himself.

“Isn’t Class B the best?” he was saying before shooting Denki a look. “It’s a shame we have to be stuck with the dumb one, though.” He dramatically sighed. “At least you can wipe out the other team before short circuiting and becoming useless.”

They’ve been specifically instructed not to antagonize you, Aizawa said somewhere in the back of his mind.

“I can’t control where I let it out,” he grumbled, because he wasn’t going to lose the exercise just because they didn’t know how his quirk worked. “I’ll just shock all of you, too.”

“Pity,” he said, putting a finger to his chin. “And I was so looking forward to seeing you stumble around.”

Denki rolled his eyes. “Well, considering short circuiting severely hurts me, I’d rather not.”

“It *WHAT*?!” came a scream from the other side of the field.

(Just once. He’d like to keep a secret, just *once*. Was that too much to ask?)

And now Jiro was marching up to him, having heard everything because of her stupid quirk - everything he had been trying to *not* say - and she had the most rage-filled look on her face. It rivaled even Bakugou’s.

“Say that again!” she practically screeched, jabbing a finger right into his chest.

“Overusing my quirk hurts me. It makes my muscles spasm-y and gives me a huge migraine.” He really shouldn’t have been mad at this point, but he still had enough energy to groan.

Why does the universe hate me? he asked the sky. No one answered. Rude.

“Okay, I take it back!” she said, slamming a fist on his chest and looking five seconds away from angry-crying. “Only an *idiot* would keep something like that a secret! Why the hell did you think that was a good idea?!”

“I didn’t want to worry everyone,” he said, rubbing the back of his neck awkwardly. “And it makes for good entertainment, I guess?”

“*Good enter*- I literally can’t even-“ she shook her head, which made the tears in her eyes fall all over her face before she settled her gaze on him with a glare. Which, whatever, right? He could handle-

“Mr. Aizawa!” she yelled, not taking her murderous eyes off of him. “We need your help over here!”

Okay, so he couldn’t handle that.

Aizawa came running over, probably because of the hint of hysteria in Jiro’s voice, and looked like he just wanted to curl up on the ground when he saw only her tears and not somebody lying dead on the floor. “What is it this time?”

He sounded so defeated, and Denki almost laughed - he probably would’ve, if he wasn’t the current center of attention.

“Kaminari, tell him what you just told me,” she practically growled.

He did, and Aizawa just pinched the bridge of his nose and muttered something about a raise under his breath. “Kaminari, please see me after class.”

Great.

“I’d like to start by apologizing.”

That threw Denki for a loop - actually, it threw the whole room upside down and out the window. Wait, that didn’t really make sense. Whatever. “What? Why?”

“For saying everything I did in class the other day,” he said. He suddenly had the most genuinely emotional look Denki had ever seen on his face. “I never knew you felt the way you do, and I’m sorry for any time you’ve ever felt that you weren’t good enough to be here. You got into the hero course just like everyone else and you’re just as capable of being a hero.”

Denki couldn’t do anything but stare.

No teacher had ever apologized to *him*, much less for something like that. It left him almost unable to move, and he definitely wasn’t blinking moisture from his eyes.

“Thank you, sir,” he said, trying his best to sound steady. “I really appreciate you saying that.”

“Of course,” he said. “I was actually meaning to talk to you before now, but you were . . .” He trailed off for a moment, and Denki suddenly remembered the day he had stormed out of class was the day Bakugou had . . . also stormed out of the common room. “You didn’t seem ready to talk.”

He remembered how distraught all of them had been the day after. No wonder Aizawa had steered clear.

“Yeah, I was too in shock from what Bakugou told us.” And wait, now Aizawa knew just how long they had been keeping that particular secret. If the look on his face was anything to go by, he was not amused.

“I see.” He looked ready to take a nap. Well, he always looked like

that, and maybe it wouldn't have been that bad if he didn't also look like never wanted to get back up. "I've been told you think you may have ADHD."

Oh, so that was what they were talking about now? "Yeah. It makes sense, even if I don't want to be crazy or something."

"It doesn't mean you're crazy," he said, his tone surprisingly soft. "Your brain just works a little differently. I think you might also have dyslexia, but we'll get to that later. Have you ever been diagnosed for either?"

Dyslexia? Okay, *that* was a new one, but it made total sense anyway. "No, my parents thought it didn't exist."

Aizawa just stared at him for a moment before pinching the bridge of his nose again. "Okay. Yeah, okay. That explains - yeah."

It was almost amusing, seeing his teacher stumble over his words in such a way.

"Can you help me?" Denki asked, only slightly against his will. "Can you help me figure all *this*-" he gestured to his head and wiggled his fingers- "out?"

"I can. I'm a licensed counselor, and I even have a degree in psychology. I would be able to diagnose you, if you would want that."

"*Yes*." He shook his head slightly from the whiplash of just how fast the word shot out of his mouth. "I want that. Er, please?"

“Of course,” he said again, almost smiling. He then shot an unexpected glare at him. “And don’t think we’re done talking about your quirk, either, problem child.”

Denki felt the blood drain from his face. “Cool. Coolio. Cool beans-“

Aizawa just rolled his eyes. “Let’s get started, shall we?”

Denki walked out of Aizawa’s office in such a daze that he almost ran into the person right outside.

“Oh, shit, sorry-“ he mumbled before doing a double take. “*Todoroki*?”

The boy just tilted his head a bit. “Are you done? Aizawa said he wanted to talk to me.”

Denki couldn’t help but stare for a moment, head still spinning at a level that was probably dangerous. “Uh, yeah. Yeah, I’m done.”

“Alright.” He shuffled awkwardly before asking, “Did he help you?”

“Yeah, a lot actually,” he said smiling at the thought and . . . *Wait a minute*. “Is he helping you, too?”

“I hope so.”

He couldn't help but beam at him. "I'm sure he will."

Todoroki surprisingly smiled back, which made Denki just grin all the wider. "I'm sure he will, too."

He then went inside, and Denki went to find his friends.

"You *idiot*." Ah, there they were. "How the fuck could you not tell anyone about your quirk?!"

"Bakubro, relax," he said, throwing an arm around Shinso's shoulders because he knew the other liked it so much - he had told Denki himself, surprisingly enough. "It's not that big of a deal."

"Not a big *deal*?" Kirishima asked, sounding almost heartbroken. "Dude, we care about you. We don't want to see you getting hurt."

"It's been happening my whole life," he said with a shrug. "I even used to like, charge our electronics at home when we were tight on money. My parents didn't care, why should you?"

He meant it as a "duh, we should totally leave this alone now" type of comment, not a "holy shit let's all start crying" comment. Which he couldn't really tell the difference between, apparently.

Someone suddenly slammed into him. He looked down to see Jiro buried into his chest. "*We care*." She shook her head, like she could just say no to everything going on around her. "We care so much."

He looked up to see all their friends similarly distraught. “Okay,” he said, trying to sound like he *wasn’t* about to become an absolute mess as he wrapped his arms around her.

“So what did Aizawa say? Did he freak out about it, too?” Sero asked.

“Oh, he flipped his shit near the end there,” Denki said, trying not to laugh and cry at the same time. “Kept yelling at me about “brain damage” and how I “held information from Recovery Girl.” He also diagnosed me with ADHD and dyslexia.”

This truth quirk made him sound even more random than normal, which was really saying something.

“That’s great, Kami!” Mina yelled, attacking him in a side hug so both her and Jiro were hanging off of him. “Now the teachers can help you in class and stuff!”

Mina was amazing. She always knew how to put a positive spin on things - how to make them all smile even when things seemed so bleak. “Thanks, Mina. And I actually think you might have ADHD, too.”

She blinked at him and let go, and so did Jiro. Damn it, he needed to shut his mouth-

“Really?” she said, seemingly just perplexed and not offended. “Why?”

“I’ve been reading a bit on ADHD and apparently it’s less diagnosed in

girls.” And when the hell did he become a so called *expert* on this, why was he spouting this stupid word vomit she obviously didn’t want to hear- “It shows up as less hyperactive stuff and more inattentive stuff. It shows up more in girls as being talkative and supposedly lazy.”

She stared at him. *Everyone* was staring at him.

“Sorry-“

“Don’t be sorry,” she said, smiling yet obviously stunned. “That makes so much sense. I’ve *always* been called lazy when I can’t bring myself to do stuff.”

“Maybe you could talk to Aizawa, too,” he said, rubbing the back of his neck. “He already said he’d help me with class work and study methods.”

Her smile widened and she linked arms with him. “I’d like that.”

“You wanted to see me, sir?” Shoto asked as he tried to sit down as un-awkwardly as possible. “Is this about what Bakugou and I said the other day?”

“Yes, it is,” Aizawa said tiredly, like he was dealing with far too much for his poor sleep deprived brain. “It’s come to my attention that apparently no one knows how to raise children anymore.”

Shoto couldn’t help but smile lightly at the sudden joke. “I’d say that’s

accurate.”

“Are you okay?” Aizawa asked, suddenly serious. “Are you in any danger currently?”

“No,” he said, answering that question honestly for once in his life. So many people he didn’t know asking about bruises and cuts and burns, and he would have to lie to them, say he was *fine*, no he wasn’t being hurt by the person that was supposed to protect him - protect *everyone*-

Because now Endeavor was trying to apologize, to *atone*.

And Shoto - well. Shoto wasn’t like Izuku. He wasn’t a forgiving soul, no matter how much he was trying to let go of the anger that had been burning inside of him for so long.

(And Izuku was right: Bakugou and his father really weren’t comparable at all. Even before he knew the truth about the blond, it was obvious. One was a kid, and the other was an adult taken over by a lifelong grudge.)

(And how weird was it, Shoto thought, that his father only felt bad about what he did *after* he became the number one hero?)

“My father has been tolerable lately, oddly enough,” he said, staring down at his hands. “I believe it’s because he believes UA to be sufficient enough at teaching me, so he doesn’t have to anymore.”

“I see,” Aizawa said. “Well, if that’s the case, he wouldn’t mind if you became a ward of UA, of course?”

“A what?” Shoto asked, thrown for a loop. What was his teacher saying? “What do you . . . What?”

“A ward of UA,” Aizawa said again. “Yaoyorozu has already become one. You would be under official custody of the school until you turn eighteen, and I would be your emergency contact. Endeavor wouldn’t be a part of your life anymore as long as he signs the papers.”

Somehow, Shoto could hear the unspoken words there: *unless you want me to have him arrested.*

“Is there anything you would like me to do in regards to your father?”

Ah, there it was.

He looked down and thought for a moment, thought of his mother and how Fuyumi was busy getting her out of the hospital, about how no one even lived with his father anymore, about how much hero society needed to settle back down before the number one hero was arrested, for goodness’ sake-

-and about the *numerous* binders already dedicated to this very thing in his boyfriend’s room.

Shoto looked up at Aizawa and smiled, which must’ve surprised the hell out of him because his eyes were as wide as saucers.

“I would love to be a ward of UA, and I don’t believe my father would have a problem with that,” he said. “But as much as I appreciate it, I

don't think I need your help on the . . . other front. Izuku has all that covered."

And maybe once they graduated they could get a little apartment together - maybe even open their own hero agency. He could visit his mom on weekends with Izuku, where she would be free of her prison and all the torment of her past. They could visit Inko, too.

And maybe Shoto could ask her for her blessing, and they could get married and raise some kids-

(Why the *hell* was he thinking that far ahead, they hadn't even been dating for two months-)

(But then he pictured his eyes, his laugh, his *smile*, and realized he'd been in love with him for far, far longer.)

"I see," Aizawa said, seemingly unaware of the fact that Shoto had just disappeared deep into his hopeless romantic side. "Midoriya, you say?"

There was edge to his voice, and it almost sounded like fear. It would've been amusing if it Shoto didn't *completely* understand.

They locked eyes, and Shoto knew they were both thinking the exact same thing.

We are so *lucky he's not a villain.*

(It was around dinner time when it happened, on some random weekday.)

(None of them saw it coming.)

It was Katsuki's turn to cook that night. Which was good, because he needed a distraction from all the thoughts in his head, and almost no one else in the class could cook for shit anyway.

He just needed an idea of what to cook, because *apparently* everything he tried to make was "way too spicy for mortal mouths."

Fucking wimps.

"What'd you guys want for dinner?" he asked Izuku and Todoroki, since they were the only ones in his general vicinity and he didn't feel like yelling for once.

Izuku hopped over while his boyfriend followed. "Ooh, what are you making?"

"I don't know yet," Katsuki said. "That's why I *asked*."

"I'll eat whatever you make, Kacchan."

Katsuki rolled his eyes. "So do you want katsudon or ramen that will burn your tongue off?"

Izuku rolled his eyes right back. “Well *obviously* the ramen, since I hate katsudon *so* much.”

He went to spark at him, because why did he always have to be such a sarcastic little shit-

. . . before he felt himself freeze.

He froze completely, and saw Todoroki and Izuku do the same. For a moment, no one noticed how they stopped moving and the mindless chatter continued. But soon enough they were all staring at the three of them, who were all looking at each other with wide eyes.

“Say that again,” Katsuki managed to say.

“I hate katsudon.” A wide, shaky grin started to form on Izuku’s face. “I hate Katsudon. I hate katsudon! *I hate katsudon*!”

He was hysterically laughing at this point with tears in his eyes, and he continued to yell the phrase for all the world to hear. Of course, the extras all looked confused at the sudden outburst, and how the three of them looked so overwhelmingly happy.

“Why is Midoriya yelling about how he hates katsudon?” Kaminari asked, bewildered.

“He doesn’t,” Todoroki said, a grin on his own face - a rare sight. “It’s his favorite food.”

Katsuki could pinpoint the exact moment where it clicked.

"*I hate katsudon! Hell yeah!*"

No one even commented on how Izuku had sworn.

"I love math class," Kaminari said, like he was testing the waters. He started grinning, too.

"Deku is the worst person I've ever met!" Uraraka yelled with laugh, running up and hugging him so hard they started to spin.

"Music is a waste of time and it sucks!" Jiro yelled with her hands in the air.

And now everyone was yelling, screaming obvious lies at the top of their lungs for all the world to hear. There was cheering, laughter, and tears.

"You're all gonna give me a headache," Katsuki grumbled. "God, I hate you lot."

If anything, his words just made them cheer louder.

Aizawa looked directly at Izuku right before the end bell was

supposed to ring, before turning to address the whole class.

"As it turns out, the quirk you were hit with *did* have an emotional aspect. The mother had a standard truth quirk, but the father's prone to suggestion quirk worked based on the heightening of his target's emotions."

Izuku blinked. So he was right?

"Why didn't we know about this?" Iida asked. And Izuku was inclined to agree - why on earth was that overlooked?

"I'm not entirely sure," Aizawa said, completely serious. "Perhaps the father's quirk registration was incorrect, or it wasn't obvious in their child that they had mixed in that particular way. Regardless, just know that if you felt overly emotional, that it had nothing to do with how weak or strong your willpower was."

Izuku noticed he seemed to be looking at Katsuki near the end there, and he couldn't help but quirk his lips into a small smile. The boy in front of him was too stubborn for his own good, so he was glad Aizawa was looking out for him.

Katsuki very pointedly ignored him, and instead turned around. "Looks like you were right, nerd."

"Guess I was," he said, scratching his temple. "Although, I'm wondering just how much of the quirk from the dad really combined with the truth quirk or if it wasn't actually all that powerful, or if there was another component that we don't know about or . . ."

He kept talking, and didn't see all of his classmates sweat drop around him.

"Attention everyone!" Iida said, hands chopping as he stood in front of the common room.

"It has come to my attention that so many of you had your secrets exposed, yet I was able to keep mine. I feel this is unfair, so I wish to share it with you."

"Are you talking about Stain?" Kaminari asked, playing with Shinso's hair. "We already knew about that, dude."

Iida looked flabbergasted. "But - but how-"

"I might've told them on accident," Midoriya said meekly. "In all fairness, I can't keep a secret to save my life."

"You-" Iida stared at him, looking oddly heartbroken. "I didn't even get to make my apology speech!"

"So let me get this straight," Katsuki said, pinching the bridge of his nose and trying his best not to scream. "You went home over the weekend. For the first time in over a month, might I add."

"Mhm," Izuku said, a pure, innocent look in his eyes. "My mom

missed me a lot."

"And you just-" he sighed heavily and closed his eyes- "happened to be in my neighborhood."

"We live in the same neighborhood, Kacchan."

"That's not-" he groaned and almost slapped himself in the face. "Okay, you just *happened* to be walking by my house."

"Naturally. It was great walking weather."

"And you thought you'd just - stop by. To say *hi*."

He looked up at him with those ever-so-innocent eyes. "It's the neighborly thing to do, isn't it?"

"And you just said "*Hey, Auntie*," like a fucking *idiot*-"

"That's her," he said with a sweet smile. "Good old Auntie-"

"-and then *socked her in the fucking jaw*."

He gave Katsuki a blinding grin and a peace sign. "Yep!"

"You really do have a death wish," he grumbled, putting his face in

his hands to hide his own smile.

“Oh! And that’s not all!” he said, like this was some damn commercial and there was *a bonus for just the low price of nine ninety-nine*, as Kaminari would say. “Your dad was home! Because they had to go over all the legal stuff Aizawa’s throwing at them! I got to punch him, too!”

“How fucking dumb are-“

“I got it all on video,” Todoroki said blankly, pulling out his phone.

Damn it. “Send that to me. Right now.”

“With pleasure.”

“Hey Jiro, have you seen Kaminari?”

She looked up at Hitoshi, and he was trying to look as not-awkward as possible. It wasn’t really working, if the smirk she gave him was anything to go by. “Last I saw him was in class, sorry.”

And now that the quirk was gone, he could finally trust that sneaking suspicion that she was lying. “Alright, thanks.”

“Might wanna try around your dorm room,” she said slyly before going back to whatever she was looking at on her phone.

Yeah, definitely lying.

So he did look, and sure enough, Kaminari was right outside his door like he was building the courage to knock.

“C’mon, Denki, you got this,” he muttered, jumping up and down a little so his hair bounced all over the place. “Just - knock on the damn door-“

“Hey,” Hitoshi said, trying to act like he hadn’t been listening. “What’s up?”

“Oh - uh, hi?” he said, eyes wide and legs crossed like he was hiding something. “Nice weather, right?”

Hitoshi just tilted his head. “You’re a terrible liar.”

Surprisingly enough, the blond boy didn’t seem all that shaken by his words. “Yeah, I was, um. I was looking for you.”

Haven’t seen him, huh, Jiro?

“Is that so?”

Kaminari looked down at his shoes for a moment, and Hitoshi got a clear view of the lightning bolt in his hair. He wondered if it was natural or dyed like Kirishima.

And he suddenly looked up, a steely resolve in his eyes. “I like you.”

Hitoshi’s brain went blank, which was weird because usually he was the one that did that to *other* people. “Huh?”

“I like you, like - more than a friend,” he said again, still looking emotionally stable somehow, while Hitoshi certainly was not. “If I learned anything from the past month it’s that you shouldn’t hide your feelings.”

“Oh, uh.” His mind was still wondrously blank.

“I didn’t want you to think I only told you because I had to,” Kaminari said, scratching the back of his neck, a flush creeping up his cheeks as his resolve finally crumbled. “I wanted you to know I did it because I wanted to.”

Hitoshi finally got control of himself and smirked lightly, and ignored the glowing feeling that was beginning to grow in his chest. “So you waited until a truth quirk wore off. To tell me the truth. To make sure I knew you weren’t lying.”

Kaminari froze, and then immediately put his face in his hands and groaned. “Well, when you put it like *that*-“

“I’m kidding,” he said with a laugh. He grabbed a hand from the other’s face, forcing him look at Hitoshi with wide-as-saucer eyes. “I totally get it. And I’m glad you waited, ‘cause I was going to, too.”

Kaminari actually jolted before staring at him with a dropped jaw. “Wait - you- you were-“

“Yeah.” He put his other hand in his pocket and smirked. “I like you. And stuff.”

Kaminari was holding his hand very tightly. “Uh, cool. Yeah, cool cool cool-“

“Just shut up and let me kiss you.”

“Shutting up now.”

“So how many couples even got together because of this whole thing?” Midoriya asked. “Like, three?”

“Do Hitoshi and I count as four?” Kaminari said. “I mean, we got together after but-“

“Yeah, that would count I think?”

“Guys, there were five!” Uraraka suddenly said. “Tsu and I got together!”

“You did?!”

“When did that happen?!”

“Did you not notice us holding hands for the past few weeks?!” she practically yelled. “Do any of you pay attention to anything?!”

“Uh, there were six?” Ojiro said with confusion. “Toru and I got together the second week.”

Nobody said anything for the longest time.

“For future heroes,” Tokoyami deadpanned, not looking up from his textbook, “some of you really don’t pay very good attention.”

“Hey, uh, nerd?”

Izuku turned around to see Katsuki right behind him, also walking back from class late. He caught up with him and they soon fell in step with each other.

“What’s up, Kacchan?” Izuku matched the other’s tone and spoke tentatively, because the blond looked on the edge of either blowing up or having a nervous breakdown.

“Uh,” he said, very eloquently, “I wanted to - *fuck*, why do I always-“

“It’s okay,” Izuku said, sensing the others obvious distress. “It’s *okay*. You can talk to me.”

“I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine-“

“No, I mean I’m *apologizing*,” he said, suddenly looking at him with great intensity. “That’s what I’m doing, not fumbling over my damn words like you always do.”

Izuku stared at him, at a loss for words for a second. “For what?”

The blond stared at him a moment longer before looking down at his shoes.

“For, well. Everything.”

Izuku stopped dead, and the other boy did too. He watched as Katsuki awkwardly fiddled with his nails, like he used to do in grade school when he thought nobody was looking.

“Kacchan . . .” Izuku said, slightly stunned - but he was mostly just confused. “You already apologized.”

“Yeah, but-“ he huffed and ran his fingers through his hair. “I wanted to make sure you knew I meant it. That it wasn’t forced, and I wasn’t being, like, emotionally manipulated or whatever-“

His words cut off with a grunt as Izuku slammed into his chest and

wrapped his arms around him. And it wasn't too long before he started hugging him back.

"Thanks," he said, trying to not sound too choked up. "*Really*."

"Don't mention it, nerd," Katsuki said softly, and Izuku wasn't going to mention how wet the other's voice was, either.

They stayed there for a few moments before he pushed Izuku off of him with a growl. "Okay, that's enough. I get it, we're - *friends* now or whatever. You can stop being clingy."

"Nope," he said, popping the "p" as they both started walking again. "You're my friend now, and that means I'm gonna be as clingy with you as I am with all my other friends!"

Izuku laughed at Katsuki shoved him to the side with a groan. "I should've just locked the door to my room as soon as that damn quirk hit us."

"But you didn't!" he said in a sing-song voice. "And now we're *besties*-"

"Shut your trap, Deku."

Izuku just smirked. "No."

"I hate you."

“I’m sure you do,” Izuku said, elbowing him in the side. “Hey, do you think you could help me with my English homework? There’s this one verb conjugation I can’t seem to figure out and I really need to learn the . . .”

(He was too caught up his rambling to see Katsuki roll his eyes with a fond smile.)

Katsuki stepped inside the little apartment with his bag slung over his shoulder. It was all he had from his house now that his parents weren’t there - they were in jail now, thank whatever god there was in the sky.

(There was some part of him that thought he should be feeling guilty at the thought. Like, those were his *parents*. He shouldn’t feel happy that they weren’t going to see the light of day for a really long time.)

(But he did feel happy, and the majority of his inner being was saying “fuck them” so he was just gonna ignore any part of him that wanted to feel bad about it.)

He would be getting the rest of his stuff later, but for now he just had his weekend bag with him. Everything he had been able to shove into his duffel as quickly as he could before hightailing it out of there.

Hitoshi was sitting over on the couch, there for the weekend too, since it was one of the ones UA encouraged them to go home and see their families for whatever fucking reason.

(And this was his family now, wasn't it?)

(Maybe it wouldn't be so bad.)

"Are you good sharing a room?" Hitoshi asked, not looking away from whatever was in his lap. "They only have two bedrooms here. I've been sleeping on the bed so you'd probably want the pullout couch."

"Yeah, that's fine," he grumbled, kicking off his shoes and putting his bag to the side. "Where's Shota?"

(Still was pretty fucking weird saying his first name outside of class, but not a bad weird. It was strangely . . . nice.)

"Doing some work thing in his office." He looked over his shoulder and smirked. "Wanna meet Kaiya?"

"Who now?" he said, raising an eyebrow as he walked over.

He was *not* expecting a fluffy black cat to be sitting in Hitoshi's lap, but then again, he didn't really know *what* to expect nowadays.

"That's Kaiya," Katsuki deadpanned, trying to not show his extreme childish giddiness at the sight. He was a cat person, and he knew it - that didn't mean everyone else had to know, though. Thank god he wasn't going to impulsively blurt that out now.

"Yep," Hitoshi said, scratching behind her ear. "She's sweet. Shota pretends to not like her but is actually super sappy when no one's

around.”

“So like with his students.”

“I’d say that’s inaccurate,” Shota said, coming around the corner. “I happen to hate everyone equally.”

“Not hating everyone is still hating everyone equally,” Hitoshi said, standing up with the cat in his arms and walking over.

“Keep up that talk and I’ll expel you,” he drawled as he made his way over to the coffee machine. “I swear, the second the quirk was gone the sarcasm came back twice as strong as before.”

“So the cat,” Katsuki said, trying not to smile at the light banter - so *different* than at his house- “She’s yours?”

“Unfortunately.” He started brewing the coffee and Katsuki knew he’d be keeping it black. “She won’t leave me alone no matter what I do.”

“Sounds awful,” Hitoshi said as the cat climbed up on his shoulder.

“You said her name’s Kaiya?” Katsuki asked, resisting the urge to grab her off of the other boy.

“Yeah,” Shota said, a sudden sad look in his eyes. “It means forgiveness. I rescued her during a patrol one night. She was almost dead when I found her.”

Okay, that wasn't a punch to the gut or anything.

"Can I see her?" Katsuki asked, which was stupid because he wasn't under the quirk anymore, so he should've been able to keep his mouth shut and his emotions in check-

"'Course," Hitoshi said, and walked over before handing her to him. She was soft and warm, and immediately snuggled right up against his heart and started purring.

"What made you want to get a stupid cat you don't like?" he asked, trying to not cry at the thought of a living thing not hating him at first sight.

"I had one growing up," Shota said, sounding strangely distant. "And I couldn't just leave her there, now could I?"

"You have a thing with strays, don't you?" Hitoshi asked with a sad smile.

"Maybe I do," he said, sipping his coffee that was as dark as he liked to make everyone think he was. "Strays that need to understand that they're worth it."

He shot a pointed look at Katsuki as he said that, like he could hear his thoughts.

He scowled. "Am I, though?"

(And he was so fucking *confused*. Wasn't the truth quirk gone? Why was he still talking about all this? He wasn't actually an open person now, right?)

(Maybe he was. With the right people.)

Shota took another long sip of his coffee before setting it down and staring at it. "Do you think I would be worth it?"

He had been looking down at the cat, but his head whipped up at the words and he vaguely saw Hitoshi do the same.

He couldn't speak, but heard the other boy choke out, "*What*?"

Shota just smiled sadly. "A blindfold is like muzzle for the eyes, isn't it? People are always scared of what they can't control."

(What was with all the information being thrown at him that he couldn't process recently?)

(Why was he so prone to emotions after a life of nothing but pure anger?)

He found it within himself to speak, if only to break the tense silence that had just washed over them, since Hitoshi seemed frozen in place. "Was it your parents, or . . ."

“Yeah. My quirk wasn’t like either of theirs, and they were scared I would erase theirs.” He smirked at them, like he didn’t just drop the biggest fucking bombshell in the history of bombshells, like this was just some random fact about some old childhood vacation or something- “I understand you better than you may think.”

Katsuki’d heard a lot of shocking things recently, but somehow this just took the cake.

But somehow . . . it didn’t.

Because it made so much sense, when he thought about it for all of five damn seconds.

“If you ever need to talk, I’m here,” he said, taking another sip of his coffee. “I just want you to know that.”

“Thank you,” Hitoshi said, speaking for the first time in what felt like forever, but probably wasn’t even two minutes. “For . . . everything.”

“Yeah,” Katsuki said, knowing he wouldn’t ever be able to put into words what he was feeling. “Thanks.”

Aizawa hummed before giving them a soft smile, like he knew exactly what they meant with so few words. “Repay me by becoming the best damn heroes the world’s ever seen.”

A familiar fiery determination filled him, and he knew it was being echoed in Hitoshi. He felt his usual passionate grin cross his face, and his teacher returned it. “You can count on it.”

(The cat - Kaiya - was still snuggled up to his chest. It seemed like she was starting to like him. Shota said her name meant forgiveness, right?)

(Forgiveness liked him.)

(He liked the sound of that.)

Izuku took a deep breath and knocked on the door.

Uraraka answered, and smiled brightly when she saw him. “Hey, what’s up Deku?”

“Hey, uh-“ he whipped his sweaty palms on his pants. “You’re studying with Iida, right?”

Her smile fell a little at his shaky tone, but she tried to keep her tone upbeat nonetheless. “Yeah,” she said, opening the door a little to show him pouring over a textbook.

“Ah, Midoriya!” Iida said when he saw him, as enthusiastic as ever. “Would you like to study with us?”

Okay, now Izuku was starting to feel bad. He couldn’t just interrupt what they were doing, even if he really needed this, and they said they were willing to help him, and it was Sunday so Shoto and Katsuki

were at remedial training so he couldn't just go and bother them instead-

"Hey, what's wrong?" Uraraka asked softly, putting a hand on his shoulder. He belatedly realized he was shaking a bit. "You can talk to us."

Iida had also stood up completely at the sight of his friend in distress, and was looking at him with the same expression she was.

"Right," Izuku said, doing his best to sound sturdy. "You uh - you said I could come to you guys if I ever . . . If I was ever feeling sad for no reason, right?"

Understanding crossed both of their faces immediately.

"Yeah, of course," Uraraka said, quickly letting him inside. "Do you want to talk about it or have us distract you with something else?"

"Something else, please," he said, sitting on the bed. *Anything else.*

"Well, if we're not going to study," Iida said, punctual as ever, "we could discuss new combination moves for the three of us."

Izuku felt a small smile tug at his lips. These were his friends, and they knew how to make him feel better, that was for sure.

An hour later when Shoto got back, he found the three of them talking and laughing in Uraraka's room like nothing was wrong with the

world.

Katsuki raised his glass of orange juice in the air along with everyone else when Mina called a toast. She was standing in the coffee table in all her movie-night-commander glory, a huge grin on her face. She had started to look so well rested recently, and he knew all the other girls were to thank for it.

They were surrounded by popcorn, soda (Katsuki wasn't going to drink that garbage though, he was on a strict fucking diet, thank you very much), and mountains of pizza and junk food.

"Let the "Good Riddance, Truth Quirk" celebratory movie night begin!" she yelled, trusting her glass into the air with a cheer.

Everyone echoed the cheering back at her, smiles and laughter ringing throughout the room like some sort of plague. Katsuki pretended to be annoyed, as usual, even though he wholeheartedly agree with the sentiment.

Good fucking riddance, truth quirk.

There was some talk of movie choices, but there was less arguing than usual for some reason. Katsuki didn't participate as usual, because all the movies they picked that weren't action movies were all equally as lame as the next.

"Hey, Kats!" Kirishima said with a bright smile as he came over with a giant tub of popcorn in his hands. He sat down and immediately tucked himself into Katsuki's side and offered him the tub. He looked

and saw it was practically caked in butter. “Want some?”

Okay, maybe he could have a little leeway with the whole “diet” thing.

“You’re training with me to burn off these calories tomorrow,” he grumbled as he stuck his hand in and grabbed some.

“Fair enough,” he said with a laugh.

“So how was staying with Aizawa?” Kaminari asked, peaking around Kirishima to smile deviously at Katsuki. “Did you see him in a bath towel?”

“No, gross,” he said, throwing popcorn at him. “It was mostly just me and Hitoshi hanging out and watching TV.”

“Lame,” Kaminari said, before snuggled up to said person like the duckling he was.

“What about me?” Hitoshi asked, glancing at them confusedly.

“Nothing, just talking about how you only watch nature documentaries,” Katsuki drawled.

He just huffed. “It’s not my fault they’re so peaceful.”

“You were watching a lion kill a whole pack of . . . whatever the hell

lions eat."

"Details."

"So what if he likes nature documentaries?" Izuku asked from the other couch, his typical wide-eyed innocent look on his face. "The babies are cute!"

"Exactly!" Hitoshi practically yelled. "See? *He* gets it. And so does Mic - he watched it with me when *you* didn't."

If Katsuki was a childish person, he would've stuck his tongue out at him. So instead he did the very adult thing and flipped him off.

"Very mature," Hitoshi said with a flat look.

"Wait, what was Present Mic doing at Aizawa's house?" Sero asked, clearly confused.

So apparently they didn't need a truth quirk to accidentally reveal confidential information.

"They're married," Katsuki said, knowing the idiots wouldn't leave them alone until they answered. "It's amazing it took you so long to realize. Actually no - you didn't even realize it, I just straight up told you. So good job."

Everyone stared at him. For a brief, wonderfully calm moment, there was silence.

And then the shouting started.

Katsuki shared a look with Hitoshi before they both smirked. After all, what was family without sharing each other's embarrassing secrets?

(And not just the embarrassing ones. The deep, the dark, the dirty - the ones that kept you up at night and made you doubt who you were and your worth as a person. Family shared that kind of shit with each other, didn't they?)

"What do you extras wanna know?" he asked slyly.

(They were all one big, problematic, disgustingly loving family, and Katsuki wouldn't have it any other way.)

Chapter End Notes

tw: child abuse, dissociation, self deprecation, possible self harm ideation

Izuku and Katsuki: hey *real name*-
Izuku and Katsuki: ok that was disgusting never do that again-

A running tally of the number of kids Aizawa has custody of: five (5)

Well! That could've been worse I guess!

Thank you so so much for sticking with me until the end of this! It's been crazy to write and I hope you enjoyed it! And I'm actually thinking of writing a bonus chapter of Izuku's POV from chapter 9, so maybe this isn't the end after all? Who knows… tell me if you'd be interested in that my ideas are dark and painful as

usual for it :) and also another Shoto chapter that would hurt but would majorly screw with the timeline.. haha who knows

Anyway, I hope I wrapped everything up well! And again sorry for not including side characters all that much, I tried but this really was just a character study of all my favorite characters.

I hope you enjoyed my personal headcanon about Aizawa and Shinso (and Bakugou for this fic ig) bonding over trauma - I haven't really seen it anywhere else so..
like, we know their society is trash. The headcanon that Hitoshi was muzzled goes really well in my head with the idea that Aizawa was blindfolded - like, if you're scared of getting brainwashed you'd also be scared of getting your quirk erased. Maybe I'll write another fic focusing on that particular idea in the future. Also all three of them are cat people change my mind.

Also don't @ me I have absolutely no idea how the criminal justice system works in Japan or anywhere really much less in a super human society so just. They go to jail for long time bby Don't come at me about endeavor either. Like if you try to say anything to me about that I literally will not answer you might even get rid your comment. We don't condone child abuse in this household thx. Not saying he doesn't deserve to earn his redemption it's just the way canon is handling it sucks. Like he's really not gonna face consequences for abusing his family for decades. Pretty sus but ok

Thank you so so much for giving your love to this fic! Apparently I made a lot of people cry and I'm sorry!! But also not because I'm really glad I can write like that ig!! It's weird lol

Love you guys! Thank you!!!

End Notes

pls comment i need validation
Like idc how long it's been since I posted I'll read your comment and love it forever

Works inspired by this one

your lies are crimson (your cuts bleed) by illu_gremlins, telling it like it is by vaguedistress, telling it like it is by vaguedistress, 2 Truths, 1 Lie by Shootingstar4444, lighten your soul by aeustry

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